

***KANADIISKYI FARMER:***  
**POETRY IN CANADA'S FIRST UKRAINIAN NEWSPAPER**

**BY**

**JEAN KOWBEL**

**A Thesis**  
**Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies**  
**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements**  
**for the Degree of**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**Department of German and Slavic Studies**  
**University of Manitoba**  
**Winnipeg, Manitoba**

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### **Abstract**

This is a study of the poetry written by Ukrainian immigrants and published in *Kanadiiskyi farmer*, the first Ukrainian newspaper in Canada, during the period from 1905 to 1910. It provides an analysis of representative works out of a total of 127 poems written by 63 poets. It describes the poetry under the major themes of Oppression/Exploitation in Ukraine, Nostalgia/Homesickness/Pioneer Hardships, New Life in Canada, Patriotism, Education, Need for Collective Action, Improving morals, and other everyday themes. The complete Ukrainian text of the 127 poems is included in an appendix. The thesis argues that newspaper poetry was an important tool used by the Ukrainian immigrant leadership in their quest for advancement of their people in Canada, and that newspaper poetry is a rich source of information on the Ukrainian immigrants and is therefore worthy of scholarly attention.

### Acknowledgements

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## Preface

Most Ukrainians who came from Galicia and Bukovyna at the turn of the century labeled themselves “Rusyny” (Ruthenian in English), and the term “Ukrainian” was not always used. For the sake of simplicity and clarity the term “Ukrainian” has been used in this dissertation, except in the context of quotations from certain poems.

Ukrainian language sources and poetry quotations have been transliterated according to a modified Library of Congress system. With respect to proper names, where information is available, the generally accepted spelling of a Ukrainian name is used in the text, e.g. Yakym D. Kravetz rather than Iakym D. Kravets, or Teodor Kochan rather than Teodor Kokhan. Both versions of such names are shown in Chapter 1.

**TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION (Modified Library of Congress)**

а --- a	і --- i	ф --- f
б --- b	й --- i	х --- kh
в --- v	к --- k	ц --- ts
г --- h	л --- l	ч --- ch
г' --- g	м --- m	ш --- sh
д --- d	н --- n	щ --- shch
е --- e	о --- o	ю --- iu
є --- ie	п --- p	я --- ia
ж --- zh	р --- r	ь --- --
з --- z	с --- s	-ий --- y (in
и --- y	т --- t	endings of per-
і --- i	у --- u	sonal names only)

## Introduction

“A preliminary survey suggests that at least 10,000 Ukrainian poems lie embalmed in the back files of the newspapers of Western Canada,” wrote scholar Watson Kirkconnell in 1935.<sup>1</sup> Critics such as Yar Slavutych<sup>2</sup> and M. I. Mandryka<sup>3</sup> have referred to this quotation in their historical accounts of Ukrainian poetry in Canada to illustrate the creative productivity of the Ukrainian immigrants and the importance of the newspapers in the development of Ukrainian literature in Canada. And, on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of *Kanadiiskyi farmer* (The Canadian Farmer), the first Ukrainian newspaper in Canada, editor Michael H. Hykawy wrote that these poems are preserved on the pages of *Kanadiiskyi farmer* and “await the pen of a writer who will create an anthology of the literature of Ukrainian pioneers in Canada.”<sup>4</sup>

This thesis is a study of the poems written by Ukrainian immigrants and published in *Kanadiiskyi farmer*, a weekly newspaper, during the period 1905 to 1910. The present work is significant because it is the first to study Ukrainian Canadian newspaper poetry. Although the study is concerned with poetry within a specific period and in one newspaper, it is nevertheless, a first step and should prove useful in making these works accessible to other researchers in the field.

While *Kanadiiskyi farmer* was established on November 5, 1903, only the first issue from 1903 and two issues from 1904 have survived in Canada, and therefore 1905 was selected as the start year.<sup>5</sup> The study ends in 1910 when the number of poems declined. This may have been due to a change in editorial policy or the personal tastes of the editor, as from time to time, the editorials commented on letters and asked readers to write on certain subjects. In May 1909 an editorial notice specifically mentioned poetry



and could have been the reason why the number of poems decreased. The newspaper complained that correspondents did not always follow the guidelines for submissions. Submissions considered unacceptable were described as follows: "someone who is irritated by some religion cooks up a poem, a second feels sorry for himself because a girl will not walk with him down the street, and a third 'philosophizes' and so on without end...this has to stop and, more importantly, do not ask the editor to print the items."<sup>6</sup> Between 1905 and 1910, 127 poems written by 63 poets were printed in *Kanadiiskyi farmer*. There were 20 in 1905, 22 in 1906, 13 in 1907, 17 in 1908, 38 in 1909, and 17 in 1910. Eight of the poems published in 1910 were by one poet, Onufry H. Hykawy.<sup>7</sup> By 1911 the number of poems by Ukrainian immigrants had decreased to three.

There are difficulties in researching this field. Problems were encountered in locating and obtaining issues of *Kanadiiskyi farmer* dated prior to 1920. The study found that St. Peter Mohyla Institute in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan was the only library in Canada with hard copies of *Kanadiiskyi farmer* dating from 1905. Using materials located in Saskatoon was considered impractical; therefore, microfilm copies of *Kanadiiskyi farmer* prepared by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta were used in this study.<sup>8</sup> This is probably the most complete collection of *Kanadiiskyi farmer*, since the microfilming was done with the cooperation of Mohyla Institute, the private collection of M. H. Marunchak and Trident Press Ltd. The microfilm reels used in this study were purchased from Western Canadian Industries Group Ltd., in Calgary, Alberta. The study was limited by the fact that some issues were missing and some were incomplete or contained portions that were damaged and illegible. Because of the incomplete material, it is possible that there were other poems

published during this period in addition to those dealt with in this study. Also, as a consequence of the quality of the microfilm images, punctuation marks were not included in the text of the poems in Appendix D as it was difficult to ascertain at times whether the punctuation mark was a comma, a period, or simply a mark on the paper that was microfilmed. In some instances, parts of a poem were illegible, or it was difficult to distinguish between letters such as “i” and “r”. The following is a summary of the number of issues available in each year of the study:

1905 – 46      1906 – 34      1907 – 49      1908 – 50      1909 – 53      1910 – 52

The dates of *Kanadiiskyi farmer* issues that were reviewed for this study are listed in Appendix A.

The research for this study was carried out in libraries at the University of Manitoba (Elizabeth Dafoe, St. Andrew’s College, St. John’s College and St. Paul’s College), Manitoba Legislative Library, Winnipeg Public Library, and the Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre. Literary sources that were beneficial to this study are divided into the categories of encyclopedias, anthologies, critical works and historical monographs. The five volume *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*<sup>9</sup> was useful for eliminating poems written by poets in Ukraine and in authenticating Ukrainian immigrant poets and providing biographical sketches of eight better-known immigrant poets. The first anthology of Ukrainian literature in Canada published in 1941 entitled *Antologia Ukrainiiskoho pysmenstva v Kanadi*<sup>10</sup> was consulted but out of the 21 writers included, only Teodor Fedyk and Apolinary Nowak were relevant to this study. A similar shortcoming was found in M. I. Mandryka’s *History of Ukrainian Literature in Canada*<sup>11</sup> published in 1968. The biographies of only five *Kanadiiskyi farmer* poets are included in

this history and it contains only a cursory analysis of their works. The book that was particularly useful in authenticating Ukrainian immigrant poets was Yar Slavutych's *Ukraiinska poezia v Kanadi* (1976).<sup>12</sup> Included in this work is a list of 300 poets, in alphabetical order, compiled from a review of the Ukrainian Canadian Press. This survey of Ukrainian Canadian poetry also provides information, supported by documentation, on six of the poets relevant to this study.

The critical article on Ukrainian Canadian prose by Myroslav Shkandrij in *Khrestomatia z Ukraiinskoj literatury v Kanadi 1897-2000*,<sup>13</sup> published in 2000, generally provided inspiration for this study and in particular shed light on the conflict experienced by the Ukrainian immigrants in the search for a new identity. The article is referred to in Chapter II of this study. Also, the bibliographies to the anthology provided updated biographical information on the poets. Another important critical work that was beneficial to this study was Robert B. Klymasz *An Introduction to the Ukrainian-Canadian Immigrant Folksong Cycle*,<sup>14</sup> published in 1970. Some of the songs analysed and recorded by Klymasz in the early 1960s are identical to poems printed in *Kanadiiskyi farmer* during the period covered by this study.

Works on other ethnic literatures were also consulted. Daisy L. Neijmann's<sup>15</sup> in-depth analysis of Icelandic Canadian literature was useful, particularly the section on immigrant literature which had themes similar to some of the themes in the *Kanadiiskyi farmer* poetry. George Bisztray's survey of Hungarian Canadian literature<sup>16</sup> focuses mainly on the literature of the Hungarian immigrants after the revolution in 1956; however, there is a short section on rural poetry in which the author explains how motifs from Hungarian folk poetry appeared in Hungarian-Canadian poetry. *Irish Emigrant*

*Ballads and Songs*<sup>17</sup> edited by Robert L. Wright and published in 1975, contains hundreds of pieces which reflect themes similar to Ukrainian immigrant themes, such as oppression and poverty in the homeland, nostalgia, hardships experienced in the new land, etc. Useful information on newspaper poetry was provided by Doris Meyer's analysis in *Speaking for Themselves: Neomexicano Cultural Identity and the Spanish-Language Press, 1880-1920*, published in 1996.<sup>18</sup>

The standard work on the history of early settlement is now *Ukrainians in Canada: The Formative Years 1891-1924* by Orest T. Martynowych published in 1991.<sup>19</sup> It was invaluable to this study as it provides insight into the initial phase of Ukrainian immigration, settlement and community building, as well as the experience in Ukraine. Also useful to this study was the description by John-Paul Himka of the legacy of serfdom and organization of reading clubs in *Galician Villagers and the Ukrainian National Movement in the Nineteenth Century* (1988).<sup>20</sup> In 1982 Michael H. Marunchak published *The Ukrainian Canadians: A History*, an English version of his works in Ukrainian which he began in the 1960s.<sup>21</sup> Although containing many errors of detail, it is still indispensable because it provides a history of the Ukrainian press in Canada. It was particularly useful in tracking down the names of the poets, as was Marunchak's biographical reference published in 1986.<sup>22</sup> A recent doctoral dissertation by Alexandra A. Pawlowsky<sup>23</sup> studied the development of Ukrainian literature in Winnipeg in relation to its socio-historical context during the period 1908 to 1991; however, it excludes literary works published in the press. Useful for this thesis, the Presbyterian perspective on social issues including immigration was explained by Brian J. Fraser in *The Social*

*Uplifters: Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada, 1875-1915*  
(1988).<sup>24</sup>

The initial step in the research was a review of the contents of *Kanadiiskyi farmer* to determine the period of the study. Notes were made of the items in each year and possibly relevant ones were flagged for further investigation and transcription, if required. Separate lists were prepared of the poems. These lists were organized by year and showed the name of the poem, the name of the poet and address, if given, and the date of the *Kanadiiskyi farmer* issue. Next, the poems were transcribed by hand. Then a search was conducted in the literature to ensure that the poet ascribed to the poem was in fact a Ukrainian immigrant. Anonymous poems, poems with unknown pseudonyms, and poems written by poets in Ukraine or identified as written in the United States were eliminated. One exception was a poem by Sava Chernetsky reprinted from *Svoboda* in 1909, after Chernetsky left Canada. In some cases the name of the poet could not be located in any of the literature. In that event the poem was analyzed for clues as to the point of view from which it was written.

A total of 63 poets and 127 poems were identified and reviewed in this study. This material is tabulated chronologically in Appendix B by date of publication (i.e. newspaper issue date), followed by poem title and the name of the poet. Appendix C contains a list of the poets in alphabetical order together with the title of their poem(s), and the date of the issue of *Kanadiiskyi farmer*. As stated previously, the Ukrainian text of the poems appears in Appendix D, organized in chronological order.

After the inventory of the poetry was completed, a thematic analysis was conducted. To facilitate this, the main themes were first identified and then broken down into sub-elements as follows:

Oppression/Exploitation in Ukraine:

serfdom, remembering past grievances, poverty, reason why forced to emigrate, anti-clericalism.

Nostalgia/Homesickness/Pioneer Hardships: (negative aspects of coming to Canada)

leaving family/wife/children/sweetheart, loneliness, longing for Ukraine, looking for work, dangers on the job, not knowing the language.

New Life in Canada: (positive aspects of coming to Canada)

freedom, self-confidence/independent action, better life, future for children, Canada is home now.

Patriotism:

pride in history/identity, knowledge of own history/identity, nation building, helping those left behind, approval of Sichynsky.

Education:

enlightenment, learning, building schools, reading clubs, sending children to school, promoting *Kanadiiskyi farmer*, reading books and newspapers.

Need for Collective Action:

join/stay together/harmony, getting rid of petty jealousies, do not fight/quarrel, discord/reason why we are lagging behind, religious strife.

Improving Morals:

drinking/hotels, cards, billiards, smoking cigars, fighting when drunk/jail/fines,  
negative view by others, need to save money.

Other Themes:

Canadian politics, war, women, nature, labour, philosophy,  
personal/friends/family.

Each poem was analyzed for the presence of the sub-elements and the themes were entered on a data sheet, in order to obtain some idea of dominant recurrent themes.

Poems which best represent the main themes were selected for more detailed examination. The form and style of these poems was analyzed as to genre, diction, imagery, rhythm, rhyme and rhetorical devices.

The present study is organized into four chapters. The first chapter describes the nature and quality of the poetry and gives an overview of the poems and the poets. The remaining chapters (two to four) are organized by theme. The second chapter shows the immigrants looking back at their native land and at the same time looking forward to a new and better future. The themes discussed here are oppression/exploitation in Ukraine, nostalgia/homesickness/pioneer hardships, and new life in Canada. The third chapter discusses the search for a new identity. The themes discussed are patriotism, education, the need for collective action, and improving morals. The fourth chapter is a survey of the other themes of the poetry in *Kanadiiskyi farmer* and identifies some differences between Fedyk and *Kanadiiskyi farmer* in terms of the authorship of a poem.

At this point a brief introduction to *Kanadiiskyi farmer* may be useful. As stated earlier, the newspaper was founded on November 5, 1903. It was a weekly published

every Thursday in a small building at the corner of Logan and Fountain Street in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The editors during the period of this study were:

Ivan Negrich (Negrych)	Nov. 5, 1903 – May 3, 1906
Osyp Megas	May 3, 1906 – March 27, 1908
Zygmund Bychynsky	March 27, 1908 – April 16, 1909
Apolinary Nowak	April 16, 1909 – May 7, 1913

The first issue of *Kanadiiskyi farmer* stated that its purpose was to provide a forum “for information on the laws of this country, history, economy, geography, politics, letters from readers in the colonies and the old country, current trends in religion, in short, everything that will benefit the people materially and morally.”

The initial annual subscription rate was \$1 per year in Canada and the United States, and \$1.50 in Europe. In January 1905, \$1 could buy a pair of shoes and three pairs of socks at H. M. Hurovich, 810 Main Street, Winnipeg, No. 1 wheat was 94 cents a bushel, potatoes were 45 cents a bushel, and butter was 7 – 14 cents a pound.<sup>25</sup> One dollar would also pay for one night’s lodging at the National Hotel, Logan Avenue and Main Street, Winnipeg, with “steam heat in every room.” The Vendome Hotel on Fort Street was more expensive, at \$1.50 to \$2.00 per day, and the Occidental Hotel at the corner of Main and Logan advertised “first class rooms and board” but did not specify the rate.<sup>26</sup> The wage on the railway was \$1.75 for a 10-hour day and farm labourers could earn \$10 to \$35 per month plus room and board, while harvest labourers earned \$79 for 2 – 3 months’ work.<sup>27</sup> The earliest records of the number of subscribers reported by Marunchak are for 1908 when *Kanadiiskyi farmer* had 3,000 subscribers: Manitoba (including 300 in the City of Winnipeg) – 1,118, Ontario – 327, Nova Scotia – 1,



Saskatchewan – 612, British Columbia – 142, Quebec – 69, Alberta – 564, Yukon – 1, USA – 125, and Europe – 100.<sup>28</sup>

*Kanadiiskyi farmer* continued publishing until 1982. The last issue of *Kanadiiskyi farmer* stated that rising costs and lack of subscribers forced it to cease publishing.

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<sup>1</sup>Watson Kirkconnell, *Canadian Overtones* (Winnipeg: The Columbia Press, Limited, 1935) 77.

<sup>2</sup>Yar Slavutych, "Ukrainian Poetry in Canada: An Historical Account," *Postscript to Posterity: Writings by and about Yar Slavutych* (Edmonton: Slavuta, 2003) 34.

<sup>3</sup>M. I. Mandryka, *History of Ukrainian Literature in Canada* (Winnipeg: Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences, 1968) 31.

<sup>4</sup>Michael H. Hykawy, "50-Littia *Kanadiiskoho farmera*," *Narodnyi Iliustrovanyi Kalendar Kanadiiskoho Farmera Na Rik Zvychainyi 1953* (Winnipeg: "Kanadiiskyi farmer," 1953) 45.

<sup>5</sup>The issues from 1904 to 1913 and after 1920 are available in L'viv, Ukraine at the Library of the Scientific Association of Taras Shevchenko. Marta Hrybalska, e-mail to Iryna Konstantiuk, 24 May 2004.

<sup>6</sup>"Zamitky," *Kanadiiskyi farmer* 14 May 1909: 2.

<sup>7</sup>Apolonary Nowak was the editor of *Kanadiiskyi farmer* at the time and obviously admired Onufry H. Hykawy's work. In 1910 Nowak wrote to Hykawy, referring to Teodor Fedyk's *Songs About Canada and Austria* (the first book of Ukrainian Canadian poetry published in Canada in 1908): "The second edition has now come out in 4,000 copies. If you could then rise on the wings of your muse and write something similar, but much better by far." Michael H. Marunchak, *Studii do istoriï Ukrainstiv Kanady* tom. III (Winnipeg: Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences, 1968-1969) 127.

<sup>8</sup>Frances A. Swyripa, *Guide to Ukrainian Canadian Newspapers, Periodicals and Calendar-Almanacs 1903-1970* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, The University of Alberta, 1985) 25.

<sup>9</sup>*Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, 5 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

<sup>10</sup>*Antologia Ukraiinskoho pysmenstva v Kanadi* (Winnipeg: The Canadian-Ukrainian Educational Association, 1941).

<sup>11</sup>M. I. Mandryka, *History of Ukrainian Literature in Canada* (Winnipeg: Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences, 1968).

<sup>12</sup>Yar Slavutych, *Ukraiinska poezia v Kanadi* (Edmonton: Slavuta, 1976) 5-7.

<sup>13</sup>Myroslav Shkandrij, "Ukraiinska proza v Kanadi (Ukrainian Prose in Canada)," *Khrestomatiia z Ukraiinskoi literatury v Kanadi 1897-2000*, ed. Yar Slavutych and Myroslav Shkandrij (Edmonton: Slovo, 2000).

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<sup>14</sup> Robert B. Klymasz, *An Introduction to the Ukrainian-Canadian Immigrant Folksong Cycle* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1970).

<sup>15</sup> Daisy L. Neijmann, *The Icelandic Voice in Canadian Letters: The Contribution of Icelandic-Canadian Writers to Canadian Literature* (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 1994).

<sup>16</sup> George Biztray, *Hungarian-Canadian Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

<sup>17</sup> Robert L. Wright, ed., *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1975).

<sup>18</sup> Doris Meyer, *Speaking for Themselves: Neomexicano Cultural Identity and the Spanish-Language Press, 1880-1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

<sup>19</sup> Orest T. Martynowych, *Ukrainians in Canada: The Formative Years 1891-1924* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1991).

<sup>20</sup> John-Paul Himka, *Galician Villagers and the Ukrainian National Movement in the Nineteenth Century* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1988).

<sup>21</sup> Michael H. Marunchak, *The Ukrainian Canadians: A History* (Winnipeg: Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1982).

<sup>22</sup> Michael H. Marunchak, *Biografichnyi dovidnyk do istorii Ukraïntsv Kanady* (Winnipeg: Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in Canada, 1986).

<sup>23</sup> Alexandra A. Pawlowsky, "Ukrainian Canadian Literature in Winnipeg: A Socio-historical Perspective, 1908-1991," Ph.D. Diss. University of Manitoba, 1997.

<sup>24</sup> Brian J. Fraser, *The Social Uplifters: Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada, 1875-1915* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988).

<sup>25</sup> *Kanadiiskyi farmer*: 5 Jan. 1905.

<sup>26</sup> *Manitoba Free Press*: 5 Nov. 1903.

<sup>27</sup> Martynowych, *Ukrainians in Canada: The Formative Years 1891-1924*, 82, 120.

<sup>28</sup> Marunchak, *The Ukrainian Canadians: A History*, 262.

## Chapter I

### An Overview of the Poetry

This chapter will provide an overview of the poetry written by Ukrainian immigrants and published in *Kanadiiskyi farmer* during the period 1905 to 1910. It presents the themes and formal qualities of the poetry, and an introduction to the poets.

This study identified a total of 127 poems written by 63 poets; 61 men and 2 women. Eight overarching themes were identified: (1) oppression and exploitation in Ukraine; (2) nostalgia, homesickness and pioneer hardships; (3) new life in Canada; (4) patriotism; (5) education; (6) need for collective action; (7) improving morals; (8) Other themes (Canadian politics, war, women, nature, labour, philosophy, personal/friends/family).

Most of the poems published in *Kanadiiskyi farmer* during this period display a mixture of themes. Oppression and exploitation in Ukraine is the main one, appearing in 42% of the poems. Ukrainians who immigrated to Canada came predominantly from the provinces of Galicia and Bukovyna, and although serfdom there had been abolished in 1848, exploitation of the peasants continued. The poems speak about the suffering under serfdom by the forefathers of the immigrants, the exploitation and poverty which forced them to emigrate, and the oppression and misery still suffered by those they left behind. The next most prevalent theme patriotism, appears in 36% of the poems. The past glories of Ukraine are recalled to inspire the reawakening and rebuilding of a great nation and to instill pride in their history and identity. The theme of education is addressed in 32% of the poems. Lack of education is seen as a major barrier to the immigrants' progress in Canada. The poems promote literacy and the establishment of schools and reading clubs.

They also chastise the readers for their ignorance and opposition to schools and learning. Nostalgia and homesickness for their native land and the hardships of pioneer life and adjusting to the new land is reflected in 25% of the poems. But hope for new opportunities and a better future for their children is also expressed, and the theme of a new life in Canada appears in 17% of the poems. The themes calling for collective action and harmonious relations in the Ukrainian community, and improving morality by eradicating habits such as drinking and gambling, account for 15% and 13%, respectively. Other miscellaneous themes are addressed in 22% of the poems. Approximately one-half of this category is devoted equally to Canadian politics, war, and nature. The subject of women occupies almost one-third of this category and the themes of philosophy, labour, and personal friendship complete the category.

While it is well known that Ukrainian immigrants composed folkloric lyric poetry, it is less well known that their newspaper poetry was also written in other genres. Of the poems examined, about two-thirds of the items can be classified as didactic poetry on specific issues, and one-third as intimate lyric poetry.

Didactic poetry has a moral purpose and is intended to convey instruction and information. Poetry of this type in *Kanadiiskyi farmer* includes exhortations to readers to read books, build schools, refrain from drinking, etc. Lyric poetry expresses the intense personal thoughts and feelings of the poet. Many of the lyric poems deal with the pain of leaving families, and nostalgia. Roughly 40% of the poetry was written in the *kolomyika* rhythm. The *kolomyika* is the most popular form of Ukrainian versification, consisting usually of "two rhyming lines with a set rhythmic pattern: a 14-syllable line with feminine ending (the ending of a metrical verse line on an unstressed syllable) and a

caesura (pause) after the eighth syllable.”<sup>1</sup> The following excerpt from a poem entitled “Kanadska pisnia” (Canadian Song), by a Stefan Didukh (Appendix D-176), in the September 20, 1906 of *Kanadiiskyi farmer*, is a good example of the *kolomyika* rhythmic pattern: *Maiu zhinku maiu dity//a ia ikh ny bachu / Rozhadaiu pro ikh zhytie//sam hirko zaplachu.* (I have a wife I have children//but I do not see them / I think how their life must be now//And I begin to weep bitterly). As far as we know, few peasants in Ukraine actually read poetry. They heard songs sung by others or perhaps recited at festivals with some sort of musical accompaniment. The melody served to reinforce the regular stresses of the lines and this memorized formula could be used quite easily to slot in prefabricated sequences,<sup>2</sup> which, in the case of Ukrainian immigrants, often dealt with such topics as hardships of life under serfdom, exploitation by the Polish gentry or nostalgia for the homeland. This combination of melody and rhythm made the verses easy to construct and easy to remember. A study of the Ukrainian Canadian immigrant folksong corpus by Robert B. Klymasz confirmed this. Klymasz found that non-ritual folksong texts were in the majority and he attributed this to “their ability to change and adapt themselves to new and different situations.”<sup>3</sup>

A factor in the popularity of the *kolomyika* style was the high incidence of illiteracy among the Ukrainian immigrants. *Kanadiiskyi farmer* reported on February 23, 1905 that 2,098,584 out of 2,769,803 (or 75%) Ukrainians over the age of six in Galicia could not read or write, so it is not likely that every Ukrainian immigrant arrived in Canada with the *Bible* in one pocket and Taras Shevchenko’s *Kobzar* in the other, as oral tradition has it. J. B. Rudnyckyj, who has recorded interest in literature among Ukrainian Canadians as early as the end of the nineteenth century, has noted the popular belief that

the first two books brought to Canada by the Ukrainian immigrants were the *Bible* and the *Kobzar*.<sup>4</sup> Most likely, however, the vast majority of immigrants arrived, as Honore Ewach (Onufrii Ivakh) has suggested, not with books but singing their beloved folk songs. Almost immediately, the immigrants composed their own songs and set them to the Ukrainian folk melodies. If they could write, they wrote down these folkloric verses and sent them initially to *Svoboda* (Freedom) in the United States and then to *Kanadiiskyi farmer* in Winnipeg. Ewach stated that the writers of these verses were uneducated, almost illiterate adults, and the editors devoted a great deal of time to correcting their submissions.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the *kolomyika* style, the lyric and didactic poetry displays a variety of other rhythmic patterns and rhyme schemes. Some examples are:

- 4-line stanzas in iambic tetrameter with rhyme schemes abcb or aabb or abab, or a combination. Sometimes there are lines with extra syllables.
- 4-line stanzas in iambic pentameter with rhyme scheme aabb or no end rhyme.
- 5-line stanzas with first four lines in iambic tetrameter and the fifth line in iambic trimeter, with rhyme scheme aabbc.
- 6-line stanzas with lines 1, 2 and 4 in iambic tetrameter and lines 3 and 6 in iambic trimeter with an extra syllable, with rhyme scheme aabccb.
- Inconsistent metre and rhyme.

Some of the didactic poetry is civic poetry that aims to serve social and civic purposes. This kind of poetry was often noted for its caustic satires against the government, and the Ukrainian immigrants wrote against their oppressors in Ukraine. The study found that most of the civic poetry in *Kanadiiskyi farmer* was written in free

verse. The lines contain varying numbers and types of metre and the poems are free of traditional patterns of rhyme, or the rhyme scheme varies greatly within a poem. The civic poetry was designed for declamation and the rhythm was adapted to the declamation. A few of these poems have a regular rhythm with the lines in a quatrain alternating between tetrameter and trimeter, but the rhyme scheme varies, for example: abcb, abcc, abcd.

The diction of the poems shows the influence of Western Ukrainian dialects and therefore the poems contain spelling variations. The same words are often spelled two different ways. For example, the word meaning “life” is spelled both as *zhytia* and *zhytie*, and the word meaning “is seen” is spelled as *vydno* and *vydko*. They used words such as *tia* (thou), *iesly* (if, since), *tu* and *tutka* (here), *tamka* (there), *hde* (where), *ony* (they), *skazavbym* (I would have said), and idioms such as *holovu sobi sushyty* (to rack one’s brains), and *stav izdyty na ‘baksarakh’* (began to ride the rails). Because the immigrants were in contact with the English language, occasionally the poems contain mispronounced English words such as *pika* (pick), *dynerka* (lunch pail), *hand-kara* (hand car or jigger on the railroad), *genyk* (gang on a railway), *skvitovaty* (to quit).

The images in the poems are drawn from everyday life, religion, nature and history. For instance, a metaphor drawn from nature describes the oppressors who exploit the peasants in Ukraine as “blood-sucking grubs,” and discord in the community is said to be “a black cloud.” One simile compares the hard labour of the immigrant to “working like a black ox.”

The standard rhetorical device of personification is used in the poetry. The poets frequently address Ukraine as “our mother.” In another instance the poet personifies