

## **Differences and Similarities in Attitudes towards Intellectual and Visual Culture within the Ukrainian-Canadian Community in Edmonton, Alberta.<sup>1</sup>**

*Susanna M. Lynn*

### **Abstract**

Ukrainian-Canadians are a relatively well-established group in Canada. This paper draws on data gathered from ten interviews about ethnic identity discourses which I conducted with new and established members of the Ukrainian-Canadian community in Edmonton, Alberta. Using critical discourse analysis, I investigate the responses to nine of the original thirty-seven interview questions, which included two ranking questions; these questions inquired about participants' opinions and evaluations of [Ukrainian] literature, language, music and important "kinds" and aspects of culture. Responses exposed some of the similarities and differences in attitudes the two groups held towards intellectual and visual culture, highlighting the evolving nature of this community, and providing detail that enhances understanding of these attitudes. I present key arguments as to why these similarities and differences may, at least in part, correlate to the unique socio-cultural environments in which each group has been developing culture since Ukraine's Independence. In particular, I posit that "the linguistic factor" (a term I use to summarize the interconnected influence that language, literature, and linguistic ability have on each other) is one of the most salient forces in shaping and informing these similarities and differences in attitudes towards intellectual and visual culture.

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## Introduction

Ukrainian-Canadians have been a part of Canada's foundation since the 1890s, and have been the focus of a respectable amount of literature, especially concerning their early history. The communities that Ukrainians in Canada established from coast to coast, especially in the West, are as diverse as they are vast; even today, they constitute a noteworthy portion of the Canadian population. Many academics and authors have written on one or more topics pertaining to the first three waves of Ukrainians in Canada.<sup>2</sup> The profile of Ukrainian-Canadians is well established in Canada largely on the basis of folklore, history, dance, Ukrainian-bilingual schools, religion, festivals, and through the works of various Ukrainian-Canadian authors and painters.

More recently, works have been published on Ukrainians since Independence, and on the fourth wave of Ukrainian immigration to Canada. Limited research, however, has been conducted on how these recent immigrants from post-Independent Ukraine are interacting with the established Ukrainian-Canadian community. Hinthor and Mochoruk recognize the gap in research on urban Ukrainians, a group they believe to be understudied (467). Furthermore, recent immigrants from Ukraine are arriving in Canada from a different political and cultural context, i.e., from an independent Ukrainian state (for details see Dyczok 378); their established identity and the forms of integration into the Ukrainian-Canadian community, as well as into the larger Canadian community for that matter, are radically different from the majority of established

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<sup>2</sup> The first wave of Ukrainian immigration to Canada was from 1891-1914, and the immigrants who constituted this wave were mainly from Western Ukraine, which, at the time, was under Austro-Hungarian rule. These immigrants were largely motivated by the offer of inexpensive hectares of unsettled land by the Canadian government (Luciuk and Hryniuk 4, 81). The second wave of immigration occurred between 1919 and 1939, and these immigrants were from the regions in Western Ukraine that had been partitioned to Poland, Romania, and Czechoslovakia, as the greater part of Ukraine fell under control of the Soviets. This wave worked as agricultural labourers, and also started settling in cities and becoming part of industrial and non-agricultural pursuits (Luciuk and Hryniuk 81-83). The third wave was from 1946-1961 and was mostly post-war immigrants with a range of professions. Many were part of the *intelligentsia*, sometimes held different political outlooks than the Ukrainian-Canadians from the first two waves who were established in Canada due to the unique political situation from whence they came. This wave raised the occupational and urban profile of Ukrainian-Canadians (Luciuk and Hryniuk 123-154).

Ukrainian-Canadians. These new immigrants bring an experience to Canada that is different linguistically, socially, and culturally.

There is little awareness of cultural differences and similarities between recent Ukrainian immigrants to Canada and the established Ukrainian-Canadian community. The goal of this paper is to explore, in an introductory manner, the various attitudes towards intellectual and visual culture held by recent immigrants and established Ukrainian-Canadians. I assert that “the linguistic factor,” a term I use to summarize the interconnected influence that language, literature, and linguistic ability have on each other, is one of the most influential and guiding forces in these attitudes. Using critical discourse analysis, I investigated participants’ responses to nine of the interview questions. These questions centered around Ukrainian culture and were included in the interviews conducted for the original MA thesis. Although this paper has a narrower focus than the original thesis, in order to provide context about the larger framework through which the responses were obtained, below is the list of the entire set of 37 semi-structured questions asked in the original interviews, nine of which will focused on, and referred to, in this paper<sup>3</sup>:

Interview Questions and Information for the Study “Identity Discourses of Recent Ukrainian Immigrants to Canada: Interactions Between New Ukrainian-Canadians and the Established Ukrainian-Canadian Diaspora”

1. Surname of Participant OR Pseudonym
2. First Name of Participant OR Pseudonym
3. Year of Birth
4. Age at time of Interview

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<sup>3</sup> Note: the original interview questions and their associated terminology are presented in the list of questions unaltered, and as they appeared to the interviewee, for the contextual benefit of the reader.

5. Were you born in Canada or Ukraine?
6. When did you immigrate to Canada?/When did your family immigrate to Canada?
7. What can you tell me about your immigration to Canada/your family's immigration to Canada?
8. What is/was your profession?
9. [If participant is studying, ask:] What is your area of study and/or what do you hope to do in the future?
10. What would you say is your cultural background?
11. Would you identify yourself as Ukrainian-Canadian? Why/why not? How else would you identify yourself?
12. Do you speak any languages other than English? Which ones? Which languages do you use at work, at school, and with friends and family?
13. In your opinion, what is more important: to take part in your ethnic community or the larger Canadian community? Why? Are both important? Why/why not?
14. What would you say is important to you as a Ukrainian-Canadian/member of the Ukrainian community?
15. Do you feel "at home" in the Ukrainian community here? Why/why not?
16. In what ways do you participate in the Ukrainian community? (If they do not consider themselves part of the diaspora, why?)
17. Is the Ukrainian diaspora important to you? Why/why not?
18. What do you think characterizes the Ukrainian diaspora to other Canadians? Is it organizations, activities, community, culture, language?
19. In which language(s) do you read ? In Ukrainian? In English? Other?

20. Have you ever read any Ukrainian authors?
21. Have you read any recent Ukrainian literature? Was it in Ukrainian or was it a translation?
22. Have you heard of Oksana Zabuzhko, Yuri Andrukhovych or any other contemporary Ukrainian writers?
23. Do you think that reading Ukrainian literature in Ukrainian is an important part of the cultural connection with Ukraine, or do you think that reading translations is a sufficient connection to the Ukraine's culture? Why or why not?
24. What kind of music do you listen to? Do you listen to any Ukrainian groups or singers?
25. (a) Please identify in descending order the aspects of Ukrainian culture you deem the most important:
- cinema
  - classical literature
  - contemporary literature
  - classical music
  - contemporary music
  - traditional music
  - classical theatre
  - contemporary theatre
  - fine arts
  - folklore
  - pop culture

- 25.(b) ask whether all of these are equally an important part of Ukrainian culture and cultural identity.
26. Who would you say is the most famous Ukrainian figure of all time and why?
27. What, in your opinion, are the biggest similarities between the diaspora and the new immigrants?
28. What do you think are the biggest differences, if any?
29. What do you think of the most recent language law in Ukraine?
30. What kind of role do you think the Ukrainian language plays in “being” Ukrainian?
31. Do you think there is any kind of language barrier between recent immigrants and the established community, or is language not an issue in communication and integration?
32. Do you follow Ukrainian politics?
33. How do you find out about Ukrainian politics? What do you follow?
34. What kinds of culture are important to you? Folklore? Dance? Art? Literature? Music? History? Ukrainian language? Why?
35. Do you think it’s more important for the Ukrainian diaspora to develop and cultivate the culture brought here and preserved by their grandparents/parents or do you think the Ukrainian community here (both established and recently immigrated) should develop and cultivate the cultural phenomena that goes on in Ukraine, such as literature, music, etc.? Why? Or do you think that both have an equal place in Canada?
36. Do you think that recent Ukrainian immigrants, who came since 1991, today face any new or different kinds of challenges that differ from those that earlier immigrants faced?
37. Do you have any closing remarks, comments, or opinions?

The interviews were analysed both separately and comprehensively using Critical Discourse Analysis, or CDA. CDA is a field of critical discourse studies that analyses all types of discourses, narrow and broad, such as texts, verbal interactions, as well as issues such as the social context of discourse and the role of discourse in social practices (Bloor 2). CDA refers to the specific branch of applied linguistics associated with researchers such as Roger Fowler, Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk and Ruth Wodak (Hart 3). Discourse-analytical research studies the relationships between language and society, particularly those pertaining to identity and ideology in social and political contexts (Hart 13). It can be used to analyse discourse on multiple levels, recognizing that discourse not only operates on a word and textual level, but also creates a continued network of thought and ideas outside of the text in societies and communities. The analysis of these attitudes can help shed light on a certain degree of overlap and divergence in the implicit beliefs and cultural values of members of this community.

In place of attributing pseudonyms to participants, recent Ukrainian immigrants to Canada who were living in Edmonton at the time of the interviews will be referred to as “New Ukrainian-Canadians,” or “NUCs” for short; established members of the Ukrainian community in Edmonton, Alberta will be referred to as “Established Ukrainian-Canadians,” or “EUCs.”<sup>4</sup> To further preserve the anonymity of each participant, but also to provide a method of differentiation among them, participants were coded with the numbers 1-5 reserved for NUCs, and the numbers 6-10 for the EUCs. Among my respondents five were NUCs and five were EUCs. Each code ends in either an

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<sup>4</sup> For my original thesis research, I conducted ten semi-structured interviews with a diverse array of female and male adults of all ages (none younger than 18), of different walks of life and professions, all of whom are members of the Ukrainian-Canadian community in Edmonton and/or who immigrated to Canada from Ukraine after August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1991. The semi-structured interviews each comprised the same 37 questions, were conducted one-on-one, and were audio-recorded so that I could transcribe them and then conduct Critical Discourse Analysis on these transcriptions. The duration of each interview ranged from approximately 45 minutes to almost 2 hours, depending on the length of the responses each participant chose to give.

“M” or an “F,” which identifies the gender of the individual. Thus, for example, the code EUC8F stands for the eighth female participant in my project, who is an *Established Ukrainian-Canadian*.<sup>5</sup>

The paper begins with a discussion of the results of Questions 25 and 26 of the interviews, which asked participants to rank 11 aspects of Ukrainian culture and name who they thought was the most famous Ukrainian figure of all time, respectively. It proceeds with an analysis of certain trends and patterns found in the answers to Questions 25 and 26. The responses to these questions may reveal more about the differences in attitudes towards Ukrainian intellectual and visual culture which were reflected in Questions 25 and 26. An investigation into the responses to Questions 19-24, and 34, which revolve around literature, language, music, and important “kinds” of Ukrainian culture, suggests that some convergences and divergences in attitudes exposed in Questions 25 and 26 may not be random. In particular, the paper explores these similarities and differences and why they may, at least in part, correlate to the unique socio-cultural environments in which each group has been developing culture since Ukraine’s Independence—environments which figuratively come into contact when NUCs and EUCs interact within the Ukrainian-Canadian community. It is important to note that this paper, and the interviews from the original MA thesis which were used, were not without limitations. While interviews were semi-structured, i.e., left many answers open for participants to respond in the way they saw fit, there were certain necessary biases to my research. One bias was that the questions led participants, albeit in an open-ended way, to speak on certain topics, which I chose for the purpose of my academic research. For example, I did not include religion as the topic of any of my questions, nor directly inquire about religion during the interviews, for the sake of limiting the scope of my research. Regardless, some participants spoke on religion, or topics related to religion, on their own initiative. Another

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<sup>5</sup> Full-length transcriptions of all interviews are available online as appendices to the original MA thesis publication (please see Works Cited).



limitation to my study is that only NUCs who had immigrated to Canada after August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1991 (Ukraine's Independence), and who resided in Edmonton at the time of the interviews, were selected for this study. The paper ends with important questions for future research and considerations for leaders and members of the Ukrainian-Canadian community and scholars.

### **The Ranking Questions**

Convergences and divergences in attitudes towards visual and intellectual culture were very prevalent in two particular questions asked during the interviews: the ranking questions. Both questions solicited participants' opinions. Opinions tend to include evaluations, and evaluations often reflect beliefs that are steeped in unspoken thought-processes, revealing pervasive undercurrents of cultural attitudes, and by extension, cultural values. While some shared beliefs, values, and attitudes are undeclared but implicitly known or felt, not all elicit unanimous agreement. The ranking questions not only uncovered some of the similar cultural values and attitudes that exist within the Ukrainian-Canadian community, but also the *differences* in implicit beliefs, and the discord that can sometimes accompany those differences in inferred values and attitudes.

Question 25 asked participants to rank aspects of Ukrainian culture by level of importance and then followed up by asking whether all of the aspects presented are equally important for Ukrainian culture and cultural identity. On average, out of the 11 aspects of culture presented, NUCs ranked "Classical Literature" first; "Contemporary Literature" second; and "Folklore" third. The lowest ranked aspect was "Pop Culture." EUCs ranked "Traditional Music" first; "Folklore" second; and "Fine Arts" third. "Contemporary Literature" ranked lowest. Both groups ranked "Cinema" and "Contemporary music" in the middle of their lists. "Folklore" was the only item

that made it into the “Top Three” for both NUCs and EUCs. Interestingly, there was a converse relation for NUCs and EUCs in their evaluation of the fine arts and contemporary literature: these two items were simultaneously one of the highest and lowest values for the two groups. The emphasis on visual culture by the EUCs is a common theme in this question and throughout; Ukrainian dance and the fine arts were mentioned multiple times by EUCs in the interviews as being very important to the Ukrainian-Canadian community. EUCs are more likely to participate in Ukrainian dance and fine arts than contemporary literature, which is not to say that NUCs do not participate at all, but that it is not dominant in their lives. Linguistic ability seems to be a key factor in EUCs’ low ranking of contemporary literature. It may also be the reason the fine arts (i.e., visual culture) is so important for them; they can participate in visual culture without needing linguistic fluency. The converse relationship EUCs and NUCs show between visual arts and contemporary literature does not necessarily indicate a lack of interest in the other form of culture; instead, it appears to demonstrate complementary expertise in areas of mutual interest, albeit interest of varying degrees.

Despite discrepancies between some of the cultural values espoused by the NUCs and the EUCs, both groups equally esteem folklore. At various points in the interviews, participants remarked on how [Ukrainian] folklore in Ukraine and Canada holds a universal fascination for EUCs and NUCs. They cited one or more of the following reasons for this mutual fascination: some of the elements of folklore present remarkable similarities; some of the same elements present “variations on a theme” where the same element has developed slightly differently as a result of geographic location and/or integrated local elements over time; and some elements present new and interesting traditions or practices previously unknown to one group. NUC1M also commented on how the identical artifact can *mean* something different and/or have different

associations for NUCs and EUCs. An important point to remember is that even the word “folklore” can mean different things to members of the community, because as EUC6F explained, many aspects of culture are intertwined, and you cannot definitively separate literature from music, traditional songs from folklore, etc. EUC10M reiterated the thoughts of several participants when he remarked on the difference in what can be important for the individual versus the collective community. He explained that on an individual level, the influence and importance of a particular aspect can vary greatly, and some aspects can be “interesting” to an individual but not be “a part of [his/her] identity, or [...] *crucial* to [his/her] identity.” However, he also believed that the lack of resonance an aspect might have with an individual does not necessarily mean the development of, and participation in, this aspect is not important for the benefit of the community as a whole.

While certain aspects of culture may not be personally practiced or be part of the individual’s knowledge base, interviewees appeared to present what could be called a “cultural conscience” (my term). It was evident that this cultural conscience influenced attitudes towards what, and whom, EUCs and NUCs felt they “should” still value on principle, and that certain similarities in thought pervaded aspects of both the NUCs and EUCs selections. When asked who is the most famous Ukrainian figure of all time and why (Question 26), Taras Shevchenko was the main choice for the majority of participants. Some participants struggled with the question, but it remained clear that the nineteenth century poet is one of the dominant figures in Ukrainian culture and history for both NUCs and EUCs. Explanations for the selection of Shevchenko revealed similar convictions regarding the values he evoked in people, and the legacy of contributions they believe he made to Ukraine and the world. It is significant that even when participants chose more than one figure, or chose a different figure than Shevchenko, he was still mentioned, and participants also instantly defended their answers if he was not their only contender for this

“position.” Interestingly, even those who questioned their own election of Shevchenko out loud resolved to keep him as their first choice in the end, as if they felt the obligation to name him as such.

Participants who chose Shevchenko had similar reasons for considering him the most famous Ukrainian. NUC1M said “Shevchenko is the Ukrainian everything”; he was essential in shaping the Ukrainian nation beyond his role as a poet, artist and writer; and he “articulated what it is to be Ukrainian and was the first to [...] envision the Ukrainian nation as different.” Others mentioned reasons that extended beyond his perceived contributions to nationalism, specifically: his unceasing fight for Ukraine’s rights and human rights; the breadth of his works; his influence and fame that extended to non-Ukrainian audiences; the fact that there are countless organizations named after him; and his literary genius. EUC8F named Shevchenko without hesitation and said he was the “father of Ukraine in all aspects,” a “symbol of where Ukraine has been [...] and where it can go,” and that he symbolizes what Ukrainians aspire to be: strong, independent, and standing up to oppressors. She made a noteworthy point in her evaluation of the symbolic and seemingly all-encompassing prominence of Shevchenko in the ethnic identity discourses of Ukrainian-Canadians:

[H]e very much is a symbol of, not only preserving our tie to Ukraine, but kind of living vicariously through that idea. When we think about Ukraine, we all, you know,[...] I’m not actually talking, Ukraine isn’t my country, but we speak about her in this way as if she *is* ours , and we hope the best for her , and so when we look at Shevchenko, that’s everything that he was, was fighting for the greater Ukraine, so I mean. For me, he is the symbol of that. (EUC8F)

For her, Shevchenko is a symbol of her support and love of Ukraine, regardless of the fact that she lives in Canada; he transcends time and geography.

While it appears the first instinct of many participants was to name Shevchenko, two hesitated momentarily and struggled to justify their second choice in their attempt to “trump” Shevchenko. NUC1M and NUC2M mentioned the writers Mykhail' Semenko and Lina Kostenko. NUC1M said that because Shevchenko had been so over-used for different purposes that sometimes he felt like rebelling against this obvious choice. He criticized science and scholarship as being driven by what he felt was sometimes a nationalistic approach, but after a struggle to make a decision, he kept Shevchenko as his first choice. NUC2M thought Lina Kostenko was of greater importance, and a stronger influence, in his personal life than Shevchenko, but believed Shevchenko did more to further the image of Ukraine, and therefore better contributed to the “wider community.”

It is worth noting that three participants did not choose Shevchenko. EUC7F prioritized religion, choosing St. Andrew, St. Ol'ha, or St. Volodymyr for their contributions in bringing Christianity to Ukraine. NUC5F and EUC6F speculated that if you asked a Ukrainian-Canadian, the most common answer would be Ruslana [Lyzychko] and Wayne Gretzky, respectively. Personally, NUC5F chose Oksana Zabuzhko and then Vira Aheieva, because she admired them as scholars who created a new path from the Soviet era to “something modern and something new.” EUC6F chose Serhiy Bubka as “the most famous Ukrainian from Ukraine,” or, as she also phrased it, “a Ukrainian-Ukrainian” [a Ukrainian from Ukraine], due to his prominence as a sports figure. Alternatives to Taras Shevchenko presented by NUCs were exclusively of a literary nature, and only included Ukrainian writers; those alternatives presented by EUCs were either saints or figures in music or sports. It may or may not be significant that out of ten participants, the three participants

whose initial responses was not “Taras Shevchenko,” and who ultimately selected other people, were all female; the five males in the study unanimously named “Taras Shevchenko.” Regardless of whether Shevchenko was the final choice, similarities in the attitudes that framed and guided the discussion about Shevchenko were nearly universal in the responses to this question; participants agreed on the diversity of his contributions to language, literature, visual art, and his prominent place in Ukraine’s history (cf. Lynn).

### **Analysis**

While the ranking questions’ results are interesting in their own right, it is the possible reasons and motivations *behind* participants’ responses that provide even more meaningful information and analysis. These reasons may reveal themselves in networks of thought and discourse that were apparent in responses to *other* questions; certain trends in attitudes towards intellectual and visual culture were evident during responses to Questions 19-24, and 34, whose topics revolve around literature, language, music, and important “kinds” of Ukrainian culture. Two threads that have continuously weaved through Ukrainian culture, between Ukraine and the Ukrainian-Canadian community, are language and literature. Based on responses to Questions 19-24, and 34, I posit that language and literature were also two of the most salient forces influencing the similarities and differences in attitudes towards intellectual and visual culture that were exemplified in responses to the two ranking questions above. Why is there a converse relation for NUCs and EUCs in their evaluation of the fine arts and contemporary literature, and what other influences and motivations are behind the patterns in the rankings revealed in responses to Question 25? I argue that linguistic fluency and the unique roles of literature and language in each group’s socio-cultural environments since Ukraine’s Independence are the most influential factors behind the

similarities, and most especially, the differences, in attitudes towards intellectual and visual culture.

Language is a significant topic within the Ukrainian-Canadian community. In addition to influencing intellectual culture, literature, and translation, it is also a factor in attitudes towards visual culture, especially for the EUCs. Ukrainian language fluency, the presence of a literary reading ability, and the *type* of Ukrainian language a participant speaks or reads are three of the greatest influences behind the starkly different evaluations of contemporary literature and fine arts between NUCs and EUCs in Question 25, three influences which I will summarize as “the linguistic factor.” As mentioned in the section above, there was a converse relation for NUCs and EUCs in their evaluation of the fine arts and contemporary literature: these two items were simultaneously one of the highest and lowest values for the two groups. Questions 19-23 provide insight into the linguistic factor that so directly correlates with this converse relationship.

The ability to read Ukrainian, the ability to read the *literary* Ukrainian language, and the actual desire to utilize this ability are small, yet relevant, and contextually significant, differentiations. Question 19 asked participants, “In which language(s) do you read? In Ukrainian? In English? Other?” All new immigrants read Ukrainian, English, and Russian, most can also read Polish, and some know Belarusian and German. EUCs read primarily English, along with basic Ukrainian; some have a basic level of French. When I asked: “In which languages do you read? In Ukrainian? In English? Other?” most of the EUCs immediately perceived this question to mean “read *literature*.” This was an interesting assumption, betraying a level of defensiveness in what appeared to be, in general, a lack of a *literary* reading ability in Ukrainian, except for those who took some Ukrainian language and/or literature classes in university. EUCs do recreational reading primarily in English, and most shared the following sentiment, expressed by EUC7F: “I read in

Ukrainian when I have to, but it's not my choice for reading a novel or even news items unless I have to." EUCs are exposed to Ukrainian literature through poetry and prose, primarily when they were presented at an event or by an organization. When reading materials are available in English, or if translations from English from Ukrainian are available, there is generally not a desire to "go out of one's way" to read in Ukrainian, unless it is done deliberately for practice. One concern EUCs shared about reading in Ukrainian was that they might only get the "general message" and not "the whole message," as EUC10M explained.

Question 20—"Have you ever read any Ukrainian authors?"—illustrated a clear difference in responses from EUCs and NUCs. All of the NUCs responded emphatically with one or more of the following: "yes"; "yeah"; "obviously" and "of course." This response was always followed by a slight laugh from all three participants who replied this way. In contrast, the EUCs all had non-committal responses to whether they read Ukrainian authors, some of which were "Umm, yes in a marginal way," "Not really voluntarily," "I probably haven't finished a whole Ukrainian book." One countered with the question "What are Ukrainian authors? People who write in Ukrainian or people who have Ukrainian names, or people who belong to the community. You have to define." The EUCs' answers convey the generally minor role that Ukrainian literature plays in their daily lives, and also demonstrate that they were exposed to Ukrainian authors differently from the NUCs. The EUCs cited children's books, Shevchenko's poetry or short excerpts of poetry in newsletters from organizations such as the Ukrainian Women's Association, short stories, texts from *ridna shkola* (Ukrainian school) to which they were exposed in childhood, and/or some university courses in adulthood. When EUCs read Ukrainian authors, it is typically not "something [they] do regularly" (EUC8F).



Questions 21 and 22 also illustrated a clear divide between NUCs and EUCs on the topic of Ukrainian literature and contemporary authors. Question 21 asked, “Have you read any recent Ukrainian literature? Was it in Ukrainian or was it a translation?” All people in the NUC group read in Ukrainian; they also read some Ukrainian authors who write in Russian (e.g., Andriy Kurkov). Although most NUCs did not explicitly state a *need* for English translations, three read them because it was part of their studies in some regard, either at the time of the interview or previously, to compare the English translation with the original text. In contrast, some EUCs plainly stated “No,” they had not read any recent Ukrainian literature. Others had been exposed to limited amounts of contemporary Ukrainian poetry. EUC9M said he had not read literature written by people in Ukraine, but had read literature in English written by Canadians who are “part of the Ukrainian culture.” The EUCs did not elaborate whether or not they used translations in response to this particular question.

In response to Question 22—“Have you heard of Oksana Zabuzhko, Yuri Andrukhovych or any other contemporary Ukrainian writers?”—NUCs and EUCs provided starkly different answers. This observation is best illustrated by simply quoting the entire thread:

NUC1M: Sure.

NUC2M: Of course. uh... Serhiy Zhadan, Lina Kostenko...

NUC3M: Yes, yes, sure, I read them, especially when I was a student I read a lot of Ukrainian literature.

NUC4F: Yup, yup, yeah I have a couple of their books, they’re really good. Like I studied in L’viv so I read lots. It’s pretty much local...Can’t be any more local...than that...[laughs]

NUC5F: Oh there is a Zabuzhko book lying right here, so yeah [laughs], I have heard of all of them.

Compare the EUC group:

EUC6F: None of those.

EUC7F: No.

EUC8F: I have not.

EUC9M: Yes, I've heard but I haven't...

EUC10M: I've heard of Oksana Zabuzhko. But I don't know anything other than that. I've just heard her name.

For NUCs, Ukrainian literature is something accessible, “local” as one participant phrased it, not inconvenient and, seemingly, a regular part of their life. On the other hand, EUCs did not have as much exposure to Ukrainian literature in general or contemporary Ukrainian authors in particular. This difference could be situational in the sense that physical copies of Ukrainian literature can be easier to acquire in Ukraine, and reading in Ukrainian is generally not as much a problem for NUCs. Ukrainian literature is not part of the school curriculum in Canada, unlike in Ukraine, unless the class, program, or school, is explicitly bilingual in nature. Literature may not be as salient a part of “everyday knowledge” in the lives of EUCs, whereas it could be for the NUCs, and this could have provided subconscious context for the evaluations by NUCs and EUCs in regards to their rankings of contemporary literature in Question 25.

The topic of literature, the subtopics of reading in Ukrainian, and the issue of translations were broached by Question 23: “Do you think that reading Ukrainian literature in Ukrainian is an important part of the cultural connection with Ukraine, or do you think that reading translations is

a sufficient connection to the Ukraine’s culture? Why or why not?” Four participants (two NUCs and two EUCs) said translations are sufficient, and incredibly important not only for the reading and learning experience of community members, but also for “non-Ukrainians” and the larger community who might wish to explore Ukrainian literature. They were accepting and non-judgmental of those who used or only wished to use translations, sympathetic to those born in Canada who couldn’t read Ukrainian, applauded those who “despite being born in Canada” could read fluently, but did not prescribe this goal for everyone. They were aware of the spectrum of Ukrainian-language competence in the community, and the potential loss of some of the cultural and literary nuances from the original, but saw reading both original texts and their translation together as a good solution for those with even basic Ukrainian skills. Additionally, it was pointed out that translations are good for both NUCs and EUCs for two reasons: (1) it is often the NUCs and fluent EUCs who carry out the translations and research, and so they can contribute and be valuable to the community in this way, sometimes even working within a network of Ukrainian translators across Canada, the USA, Australia, and Ukraine to complete this endeavour; and (2) it is not necessarily only the EUCs and non-Ukrainians who might benefit from the translations, as postmodern texts and the evolution of language (e.g., slang) can present a challenge for even native speakers of Ukrainian, who could benefit from seeing how it is translated into English.

Four participants (three NUCs and one EUC) expressed the belief that—while translations are beneficial and can be a way to “stay connected”—the original is always better and reading in Ukrainian should be a priority for members of the community: one always “gets more out of it in your mother tongue [Ukrainian].” They stressed the role of language as a core connection to culture, and that while words can be translated, “cultural notions” are often lost in translation. NUC2M pointed to the importance of language as a cornerstone of mutual knowledge within the

community. He said that while it is not “compulsory,” speaking/reading Ukrainian language “is where everything else comes from,” and thus creates a stronger link to culture. EUC8F said it was “direly important” that she read Ukrainian literature in Ukrainian, but that she doesn’t do it as much as she “should,” and was disappointed that Ukrainian-Canadians [EUCs] can “get stuck reading the historical Ukrainian things like Shevchenko.” She felt EUCs should make a conscious effort to not only read in Ukrainian, but read works in contemporary Ukrainian “*actually* coming out of Ukraine now.” She echoed the thoughts of a few others when she “agreed” that translations are useful for those who can’t read in Ukrainian, and that “any link you can have” (i.e., a translation) is better than no link at all to Ukrainian literature. The opinions of these four participants revealed the attitude that reading in Ukrainian was “better” not only in and of itself, but also because of the connections it fostered between contemporary Ukraine and the “contribution” they believed this connection made to maintaining Ukrainian language in Canada.

The responses of EUC6F and EUC10M epitomize EUC attitudes towards literature, reading in Ukrainian, and the types of different Ukrainian spoken within the community—attitudes which could help explain the simultaneously lower evaluation of contemporary literature and a higher evaluation of fine arts in many EUC answers to Question 25. The former responded that reading in the original was a gateway to translations, and that while she “philosophically” thinks language and literature are important, she has not personally pursued that avenue and “[doesn’t] have that facility [herself].” Without being prompted, she suddenly started talking in the middle of her response about “the language barrier between the immigrant community and the Canadian community.” This reveals the presupposition, at least in her mind, that there is indeed a language barrier, i.e., that a difference indeed exists in the Ukrainian spoken by EUCs and NUCs. She explains that “if you don’t speak the right kind [of Ukrainian], whether it’s contemporary or

archaic, from the right area in Ukraine, you're not perceived to be the *real* thing." Without being interrupted or prompted, she continued with the statement: "I don't think that's any reason to discount the contributions that people can make, regardless of how far back their connection goes or what their fluency." In contrast, EUC10M was not apologetic or defensive for his personal lack of interest in literature even though he added, "there's some really incredible stuff out there." He was pessimistic about the younger generation's interest in literature, but applauded the people who research and enjoy literature, saying they add value to those areas of study.

As is evident in the above discussions of responses, the linguistic factor is strongly influenced by the type of Ukrainian a participant may speak or read; interest and participation in the realm of contemporary Ukrainian literature may be affected by what participants viewed, and expressed, to be the different types of Ukrainian spoken by NUCs and EUCs. While language is a commonality between NUCs and EUCs, it is also a differentiating factor. Even though Question 30 is not directly related to the ranking questions, it invoked strong opinions about language's role not only in identity (the topic of the question), but also the vital role it plays in culture. It also provides background into the EUCs comparatively lower participation in active readings of contemporary literature—they may feel they are reading a different variant of the language. Participants spoke relatively extensively on a phenomenon that has arisen in the Ukrainian language situation in Canada. Multiple people cited historical circumstances [in Ukraine] in which the Ukrainian language was oppressed, and claimed that one of the contributions of Ukrainian communities outside of Ukraine is that they helped ensure that the language did not disappear, cultivating it through schools, producing resources through academic institutions, and maintaining it beyond the borders of Ukraine. However, this "preserved" Ukrainian differs from the

contemporary Ukrainian EUCs encounter through both recent immigrants and “updated” academic courses in Ukrainian.

According to some participants, “diasporic Ukrainian” (participant’s term) can be quite different from contemporary Ukrainian because it contains vocabulary from a hundred years ago. NUC5F said her first encounter with “diasporic Ukrainian” was odd because her comprehension was hindered. She joked that: “we were not speaking the same language [...] which is weird because it is the same language, but you have this era in between.” On the one hand, she was frustrated with EUCs who claimed to “be Ukrainian” but had never been to Ukraine, did not speak any Ukrainian, did not know anything about the culture but “just did some Ukrainian dancing,” and had a Ukrainian grandparent who came here “in 1907.” She held the belief that if an individual possessed at least “some knowledge of it [the language], it would be enough.” NUC1M also pointed to the different influences on the Ukrainian language in the last hundred years, and how those who immigrated here at that time were speaking a Ukrainian slightly different than say those who immigrated a few decades later, or those who are immigrating now, and that in some ways, one could say the Ukrainian language of EUCs is “more authentic.” He said some of contemporary Ukrainian is partially influenced by Russian, but that English and all languages evolve, and that “bickering about whose language is correct [is something] we have to be really careful about because language is a living thing [and] it evolves.” He joked that we can’t go back to speaking British or Shakespearean English either, and that “as long as you can communicate [and] enjoy literature as a work of art,” he doesn’t think it “makes any sense” to argue about whose Ukrainian is “better.” EUC8F explained that part of the issue is that EUCs have “created our own Ukrainian-Canadian language of Ukrainian, that is [...] stuck from when we immigrated here.”

While Ukrainian language may have developed differently in Ukraine and Canada, thereby affecting the socio-cultural environment in which NUCs and EUCs are interacting, this “new” or “modern” Ukrainian language that NUCs are bringing to Canada, and its potential accompanying discomfort for some community members, shows some similarities to a situation that occurred decades ago. Beginning in the late 1940s, third-wave Ukrainian immigrants to Canada greatly impacted the linguistic situation in the Ukrainian communities outside of Ukraine, sparking a “linguistic rejuvenation” in the Ukrainian population (Luciuk and Hryniuk 144).<sup>6</sup> This linguistic rejuvenation especially helped the youth develop their Ukrainian language as many English words were being appropriated into Ukrainian in Canada, and strong English accents were being developed due to the English-dominated surroundings (146). While this rejuvenation was temporary and only strongly affected the larger Ukrainian concentrations, the influx of standard Ukrainian from the intelligentsia and youth who had recently been educated in Ukraine is still noteworthy (154).

Linguistic competency and a literary reading ability are clear factors in NUCs high rating of contemporary and classical literature; the lack of a strong presence of both of these appear to also be a contributing factor to EUCs comparatively lower rating of literature in general, but especially contemporary literature. It is also a large contributor to the popularity of fine arts and visual arts, as well as their high rankings in the EUCs evaluations (contrary to the NUCs); visual culture (art, dance, music etc.) allows for participation without a high level of linguistic competency, if any is needed at all. The responses to Questions 34 and 24 further illuminate the

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<sup>6</sup> As few of these immigrants spoke fluent English or French, they actively looked for places where they could communicate in Ukrainian, resulting in larger concentrations of Ukrainians and of the Ukrainian language and giving Ukrainian language a higher external profile (Luciuk and Hryniuk 145). Another factor in the active desire to speak Ukrainian in Canada was that this wave of immigrants hoped to preserve and develop their language because it was being suppressed in favour of Russian in Ukraine (145).

network of thoughts, assumptions, and opinions which I believe shape the discourse surrounding these evaluations; they expose a difference in attitudes towards visual culture, and sometimes participation in it.

Question 34 asked, “What kinds of culture are important to you?” NUCs listed “literature,” “folklore,” “history,” “language,” and “music,” stressing the interconnectedness among all of them. EUCs listed visual art, dance, culinary traditions, music (esp. liturgical and folk), organizations, and language. The popularity of Ukrainian dance in Canada, in contrast to Ukraine, was brought up, and this high level of participation led NUC4F to comment that he saw EUCs as “caretakers of Ukrainian dance,” given the vast amount of what he viewed was preservation of Ukrainian dance, as well as its new creation in Canada. This sentiment was echoed, in varying degrees, in comments made by every NUC at some point in his/her interview. Opinions about visual art were energetically shared in this question as well. Below, I deliberately provide two contrasting viewpoints to illustrate the spectrum of opinions this question elicited. One young EUC expressed her thoughts on why visual art plays such a large role in her family and life:

Art, art, I’m, when I think art, I mean, what I typically first think of is, you know, paintings and visual art, but visual art’s a *huge* thing that I think actually plays a gigantic role in Ukrainian-Canadian identity. I mean the artist Larisa Cheladyn, I mean, I don’t know any Canadian household, Canadian-Ukrainian household that doesn’t have a “Larisa” print in their home, and that in itself is kind of the brand of “Yes, I’m a real Ukrainian. I support the Ukrainian artists. I want something cultural and beautiful and representative of both Ukrainian-Canadian culture, and of Ukraine, Ukrainian culture.” So I think visual art, I mean, my home personally and my parents’ home, and my grandparents’ home is full of Ukrainian artists, Ukrainian-Canadian artists, so visual art’s a huge thing. (EUC8F)



Thus, visual art—in the form of collecting, displaying, and symbolism—can be a form of participation, albeit somewhat passive, in Ukrainian culture. It is a participation which demands no “linguistic factor,” and which can be customized to not only aesthetic preferences, but also those particular values one wishes to communicate to others.

On the other hand, one NUC was critical of the established community due to what she perceived as a narrow view of Ukrainian culture:

[T]his concept of Ukrainians is ridiculous. Like you have a picture of a beautiful field. What makes it Ukrainian? Let's put there several poppies, dancing boots, embroidery. Here you go. That is Ukrainian, right away. Oh my gosh, this is like such, it's a jo—, it's not, it's not, it's so much more than that, you know? So. I know that it's like easily identifiable for general public, but what I'm saying, you just gotta go further than those poppies and dancing shoes and Shevchenko and icon. (NUC5F)

The prominent role of Ukrainian dance in Canada, as well as the connection these easily identifiable Ukrainian costumes have to the immigration history of many families, may be the source of inspiration for the incorporation of such items into a lot of art from the established Ukrainian-Canadian community: inspirations which may not be as readily identifiable or relevant to some NUCs. To what was NUC5F referring when she said Ukrainian [culture] is “so much more?” It is interesting to note that her interview-profile has a recurring theme of the importance and relevance of contemporary literature, and her opinions on Ukrainian visual art in Canada were the most critical of all of the participants.

Diverging attitudes were also echoed in responses on a related topic, namely, music. Question 24 asked to what kind of music the participant listens, and whether the selection includes any Ukrainian groups or singers. While EUCs listen to a range of music, their responses indicated

that they listen more to Ukrainian folk, ethno-pop, fusion, choral and liturgical music than do NUCs. They also identified what could be categorized as the “genre of *zabava* music,” a term that was used by more than one EUC to describe the mix of upbeat Ukrainian folk songs, polkas, and English and Ukrainian party songs, played specifically at Ukrainian-Canadian weddings and events that include dancing. EUC8F used the term “*zabava*-style music” to articulate both the previously described style of music *and* what she called “the strange contemporary mix that we kind of have created in Canada of Ukrainian music that’s either old folk music with a new twist to it, or just music that they’ve produced that’s *in* Ukrainian.” Both EUCs and NUCs cited Sofia Rotaru, *Okean Elzy*, Ruslana, *Haidamaky*, *Mandry*, and Madheads. Only EUCs mentioned Iryna Bilyk, and Ron Cahute and his collections such as *Barabolya*. Only NUCs mentioned Taisia Povaliy, *Tartak*, *Skryabyn*, Boombox, *Burdon*, and *Shokolad* (cf. Lynn).

While some NUCs said they do listen to some Ukrainian folk and pop music, they equally enjoyed, and in two cases, preferred non-Ukrainian music, especially classical, jazz, and French and Brazilian music, pointing to a strong interest in “international” music. Some reasons and justifications were given for these preferences. Among them, NUC1M mentioned that he did not prefer Ukrainian music when he lived in Ukraine, because, in his words, it was “quotidian,” influenced by Soviet heritage, and in the “shadow” of the Russian music industry and Soviet legacy. His use of the term “Soviet legacy” suggested a negative connotation. NUC1M admitted that he thinks this perception is changing for both himself and others thanks to an emerging generation of twenty-something-year olds who are not as influenced by Soviet music, and the “cheesy [...], simplistic [...] *sharavarshchyna*” of the early 1990s. He also attributes the growing popularity of Ukrainian music world wide to events like Eurovision, where Ukrainian pop-singer Ruslana Lyzychko won first prize. He has a sense that Ukrainian musical talent is slowly changing

its approach, “trying to do something creative and innovative.” NUC3M echoed NUC1M’s initial criticism of Ukrainian music, saying that because Ukrainian music is “kind of self-centred” and not quite as “multicultural” as Brazilian music mixed with jazz, this makes traditional Ukrainian music “backward [...] to some extent.” He did attribute this “self-centredness” to the “encapsulation” Ukrainian culture experienced during Soviet times. Clearly, the Soviet legacy was viewed as having had a detrimental impact on the development of Ukrainian music and arts, but that the more Ukrainian music developed and branched out on its own, the “better” it became in quality. It could be the case that similar attitudes pervade regarding visual art, and that visual representations NUCs may deem as “cheesy,” “self-centred,” and “encapsulated” could receive more criticism than those they evaluate as transcending these stereotypes.

Regarding music, and evidently also visual art, such negative connotations did not seem to resonate with EUCs, who did not view Ukrainian music as being tied to the Soviet legacy in any manner that propelled them to view it as “cheesy” or “backward.” But, when this issue was considered at all, the Soviet legacy was viewed as an overbearing, unjust and damaging influence that needed to be rectified, seemingly fuelling the EUCs’ passion for Ukrainian music even further. Not only do EUCs enjoy the new musical “blends” that are coming directly out of Ukraine, but they are also part of the innovation of “blends” in Ukrainian music which are occurring in Canada, as part of the specific “music-scene” fostered largely by the established community. Participants spoke of what they believed to be the unique traits of “*diaspora*” music, which some called “diasporisms,” to refer to the specific combinations, blends and interpretations of Ukrainian music that have developed in Canada. These continue to evolve and are cultivated by performers, participants, and fans of this music. The genre “*zabava*-music” combines traditional Ukrainian music with norms and trends of Canadian and English music (cf. author’s MA thesis). It is not

uncommon for members of the EUC to either sing or play an instrument themselves in groups or bands, or know someone who does. The enthusiastic participation in music, either by literally participating, or listening to certain types of music, by EUCs can again be partially attributed to the linguistic factor. Many folksongs, which are very popular with EUCs, are facilitated by a type of script for the linguistic component of the activity, a support which seems to encourage participation and could make the language in the songs less intimidating. Additionally, the second part of folksongs, that is, the actually playing of instruments, musical talent and development, is unhindered by a lack of linguistic fluency. It is evident that folksongs are a large influence in EUCs repertoire of both listening and performance. Liturgical and choral music, which were also mentioned several times in EUCs responses, are also somewhat “facilitated” by “scripts” in books or binders of music; with a working knowledge of Ukrainian and basic reading skills, or the ability to read transliterations, as well as musical knowledge, one can more easily participate in this music than, say, one can read a work of contemporary literature. Thus, once again, the linguistic factor seems to be an influential and guiding force in attitudes towards aspects of culture.

## **Conclusion**

This article has discussed, in an introductory manner, the differences and similarities in attitudes towards visual and intellectual culture in the established Ukrainian-Canadian community. It articulated that “the linguistic factor” (as well as some cultural developments and values in Ukraine and Canada) can have a profound influence on these attitudes. Analysis of these attitudes provides insight to the way Ukrainian culture, and its relationship with Ukraine, is currently developing in Canada.

My study has opened up avenues of research to be considered—and there is much left to be done. The next step in this research should follow up in more detail as to whether members of the community (both established and recently immigrated) think it is more important for their community to develop in its own right and cultivate the culture brought here and preserved by their grandparents/parents, or whether the community should develop and cultivate the cultural phenomena that goes on in Ukraine, such as literature, music, etc. If so, to what degree does one or the other take precedence in Canada’s multicultural context, or do members think that both have an exactly equal place in all settings within Canadian society? With 2016 marking the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ukrainian Immigration to Canada, and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ukraine’s Independence, the evolving nature of this community presents leaders, members, and scholars with many experiences and attitudes to consider, study, and research.

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<sup>7</sup> For a complete bibliography of the MA thesis research from which this article was written, please see pages 147-154 of the following online publication: Lynn, Susanna. *Ethnic Identity Discourses of Recent Ukrainian Immigrants to Canada: Interactions between New Ukrainian-Canadians and the Established Ukrainian-Canadian Diaspora*. MA thesis, University of Alberta, 2014.

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