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KNOWN AND UNKNOWN FEMALE TRANSLATORS: UKRAINIAN DIASPORIC SCHOOL

Summary. This article examines the triadic nexus of gender–women–translation through the prism of the “cultural turn” in Translation Studies, focusing on historiographical recovery of feminine and feminist contributions to translation history. The research highlights the absence of scholarly attention to Ukrainian diasporic women translators, whose works remain largely unknown and unstudied. Drawing on feminist translation theory, particularly the contributions of Sherry Simon, Olga Castro, and Louise von Flotow, the paper contextualizes the gendered dimensions of translation practices within broader socio-cultural and political frameworks.

The Ukrainian diasporic translation school is represented in the article by translation and literary works of 4 female translators: 1) Olha Kosach-Kryvnyiuk (Olesia Zirka), 2) Nadia Syvorovtseva, 3) Myrosia Stefaniuk, 4) Oksana Maksymchuk. Short bio sketch for each abovementioned translator is given. The cultural role of these diasporic women translators extends beyond linguistic mediation, as they act as vital agents in preserving, transforming, and transmitting national literary heritage to new cultural contexts. Yet, despite their significant contributions, these translators are mainly forgotten in mainstream historiographies, leaving their names and works absent from the canon of translation history.

The article situates Ukrainian diasporic female translators within a global feminist translation discourse. Through textual analysis and historiographical inquiry, the study reconstructs the cultural agency of selected female Ukrainian translators, demonstrating their role in bridging Ukrainian literature with foreign readerships while challenging androcentric norms.

The findings not only fill a significant gap in Ukrainian translation historiography but also contribute to a more inclusive understanding of translation as a gendered cultural practice. This research advocates for further interdisciplinary studies integrating gender theory, diaspora studies, and translation history.

Key words: feminist translation, gender and translation, Ukrainian diaspora, women translators, cultural turn, historiography, diasporic literature.

Introduction. Analyzing the triad of gender–women–translation through the prism of the «cultural turn» in Translation Studies has morphed into a historiographical project of recovering feminine and feminist contributions to the translation practice and history. In this context there is an intrinsic interest in rediscovering the forgotten names of women translators from Ukrainian diaspora.

The **purpose** of the article is bringing to light the outstanding female representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora and reinstitute their shelved translation works.

Analysis of the latest research and publications. The concept of gender, commonly used to examine how sexual differences shape

intercultural and social-political patterns, has become the subject of growing debate. Gender difference has been played out not only in the metaphors describing translation, but in actual practices of translation, in the specific social and historical forms through which women have understood and enacted their writing activities [1, p. 2]. Olga Castro highlights that gender affects how readers from numerous cultures interpret translations [2].

Overlapping of gender and translation as separate study results from the development of Canadian academic circles, among which contributions of the «cultural turn» in Translation Studies, post-structuralism and deconstructionism, as well as Anglo-Saxon feminism and French feminism were converged. Thus, the very convergence prompted several feminist writers, such as Nicole Brossard and Louky Bersianik to employ their literary works as instruments for subverting the androcentric and sexist discourse that had long dominated the canon of world literature. A group of feminist translators – such as Louise von Flotow, Barbara Godard, Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, Howard Scott, Fiona Strachan, and Marlene Wildeman – aligned themselves with the avant-garde led by these Canadian authors. Through their translations, they sought to foreground the authors' voices, thereby actively participating in the rewriting of these texts. While the strategies employed in such practices varied considerably, Louise von Flotow, in her 1991 article *Feminist Translation: Contexts, Practices and Theories* [3, p. 80], categorized them into four principal types: supplementation, pref-aces, footnotes, and the hijacking of the text.

During the 1990s, this particular literary and translational orientation in Canada served as a catalyst for the emergence of sustained scholarly inquiry and theoretical elaboration concerning the intersection of gender and translation. This period marked the institutionalization of such debates within Translation Studies, situating gender as a critical category of analysis and fostering interdisciplinary dialogues that integrated feminist theory, literary criticism, and translation theory.

The study of feminist interventions into translation are widely represented from the cultural perspective in the works of Barbara Godard, Sherry Simon and Luise von Flotow, with Sherry Simon calling the femininity of translation a persistent historical trope. «Woman» and «translator» have been relegated to the same position of discursive inferiority. The hierarchical authority of the original over the reproduction is linked with imagery of masculine and feminine; the original is considered the strong generative male, the translation the weaker and derivative female [1, p. 1], while feminist interventions into translation have served to highlight the fact that cultural transmission is undertaken from partial (and not universal) perspectives, from constantly evolving cultural positions [1, p. 166].

Over three decades after the advent of pioneering Canadian researchers that brought to prominence the triadic nexus of gender-women-translation, scholarly engagement with these interrelated concepts has not only persisted but intensified. Researchers have continued to interrogate, reconceptualize, and interconnect them, ensuring that the discourse remains both active and dynamic within contemporary Translation Studies. This field of inquiry has expanded significantly, encompassing a growing diversity of cultural, geographical, and disciplinary contexts. Significant contributions to this ongoing scholarly conversation include the panoramic studies of O. Castro [4], A. Brufau [5], J. Santaemilia [6], and O. Castro and E. Ergan [7].

Results and discussion. Prior to the establishment of feminism as a recognized academic field in the twentieth century, the role of gender in translation received scant scholarly attention. With the emergence of postcolonialism and feminism as influential theoretical paradigms, both have engaged with the newly interdisciplinary domain of Translation Studies, leading to a reconceptualization of the wide notion of women in translation.

While exploring Ukrainian translation studies scientific discourse, we could not find articles addressing the problem of female role in Ukrainian diasporic translation. Moreover, some Ukrainian diasporic female translators are unknown and their bridge-building role between the source and target cultures has not been studied yet.

Women have always been actively engaged in translation. Unlike many other professions, this occupation did not force women to assert their equality with male colleagues [8, p. 144].

This statements could be also applied to the representatives of the Ukrainian diasporic school of translation, which was formed by those emigrating to other countries. The waves of Ukrainian emigration generally reflect the historical-political and socio-cultural factors that encouraged emigrants to assert themselves within a Ukrainian identity. V. Lopukh distinguishes four waves of Ukrainian emigration: the 1st wave – *economic* – 1870–1914; the 2nd wave – *political-economic* – 1923–1939; the 3rd wave – *political* – 1946–1959; the 4th wave – *economic* – 1991 to the present [9, p. 193].

However, with respect to the contemporary period this periodization requires additional clarification, because with the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation the number of emigrants has increased sharply. Therefore, the 5th wave of emigration, which began in 2024 and continues to the present, perhaps most clearly reveals a change in the modality of emigration and in the life of the Ukrainian diaspora as a whole. Extrapolating the periodization of Ukrainian emigration to the translation activity of Ukrainian women abroad, one can likewise attempt to distinguish five stages in the development and activity of the Ukrainian diasporic school of translation, with attention to women translators who are little known to the wider public. Accordingly, we will illustrate each of the historical periods mentioned above with one representative of the Ukrainian diasporic school of translation.

1870–1914 – the early 20th century, when Ukrainian culture faced political and linguistic suppression is marked by the active literary and translation work of Olha Kosach Kryvnyuk (pseudonym – Olesia Zirka) (26.07.1877–11.11.1945). Being not only a prominent Ukrainian, and diasporic translator (had been living in the Czech Republic and Germany), but also an ethnographer and physician, she had managed to bridge the literary traditions of English-speaking authors and Ukrainian readers. Her translations

were part of a broader cultural mission – to make global literary heritage accessible in the Ukrainian language, thus strengthening the literary culture of Ukrainians both in their homeland and in diaspora communities. Among her translation works we would like to highlight a few important renderings of English literature, made from English into Ukrainian, most notable for younger readers. She translated a sentimental animal story «Bingo» by Ernest Thompson Seton – «Бінго» [10], a tale from Rudyard Kipling's «Just So Stories» collection, «The Cat That Walked by Himself» – «Той кіт, що ходив, де хотів» [11]. Both prose translations were published in 1918 in Katerynoslav.

The same year «A Christmas Carol» by Charles Dickens was translated into Ukrainian «Різдвяна пісня в прозі, або Різдвяне оповідання з привидами» was published [11]. The very novella was also translated by another diasporic female translator, Nadiia Surovtsova in 1923.

Through these works, Olesia Zirka not only introduced English-language classics to Ukrainian readers, but also contributed to shaping the national literary canon and fostering intercultural dialogue.

1923–1939 – is a period during which cultural and artistic ties persisted, notably in the realm of literary translation. Lada Koliivets observes that during this time translations by residents of Western Ukraine were published in Soviet publishing houses and periodicals, and vice versa: translations made in the Ukrainian SSR appeared in West-Ukrainian periodicals and in the émigré publications [13, 5].

A telling example of translation activity in forced emigration is Nadiia Surovtsova (Surovtseva) (1896–1985) – the first woman in Europe to be granted the rank of Ambassador, a Doctor of Philosophy, writer and lecturer, who from 1918, because Kyiv was occupied by the Bolsheviks, was forced to remain in Austria. In 1923, the Vienna publishing house «Chaika» brought out Charles Dickens's fairy tale «The Cricket on the Hearth» with a foreword by Ostop Hrytsai [14]. The following year, 1924, two of Surovtsova's translations appeared: Walter Scott's novel «Ivanhoe» and Frances Eliza Burnett's novel «Little Lord Fauntleroy». Incidentally, works by F.E. Burnett were actively translated in Ukraine. For instance, Varvara Litynska translated the above-mentioned novel «Little Lord» in 1923, and in 1958 this very translation was issued in a new edition revised by another diasporic translator and editor Nataliia Kohunska.

Recalling the remarkable figure of Nadiia Vitaliivna Surovtsova, we should also mention her five-year period of complete isolation after arrest for refusing to inform on her colleagues, during which «she translated a great deal and studied Italian, Japanese and Turkic languages» [13, p. 366].

1946–1959 – period, marked by intensified Russification policies, suppression of national culture, and persecution of intellectuals when Ukraine experienced the consolidation of Soviet political control.

The post-war devastation, coupled with political repression, contributed to successive waves of emigration, particularly among intellectuals, writers, and political activists. In this context, the Ukrainian diaspora became a crucial site for the preservation of national identity, cultural production, and the continuation of intellectual traditions beyond the reach of Soviet censorship. This period is represented by female diasporic translator Myroslava Stefaniuk (1943) whose work has significantly contributed to the promotion of Ukrainian literature abroad.

After emigrating with her family to the United States in the late 1940s, she became deeply involved in Ukrainian community life, education, and cultural preservation. During the 1960s–1970s, she participated in the human rights movement, translating for international forums and assisting prominent dissidents such as Nina Strokata-Karavanska. M. Stefaniuk's translations from Ukrainian into English encompass the poetry of Mykola Horbal, Mykola Vorobiov, Vasyl Holoborodko, Ivan Malkovych, Natalka Bilotserkivets, Raisa Lysyha, Tadei Karabovych, among others, published in collections and anthologies including «Wild Dog Rose Moon» [15], «From Three Worlds» [16], «The White Chalk of Days» [17], «A Hundred Years of Youth» [18], «Shifting Borders» [19], and «Details of an Hourglass» [20]. Her work stands as an important bridge between Ukrainian literary heritage and the English-speaking world.

In general, following the scholarly studies of Ihor Kachurovskyi, in which the translator and translation critic analyzes literary translation in light of the Ukrainian diaspora's activity, the year 1946 came to be conventionally regarded as the starting point for the existence of the Ukrainian diasporic school of translation. New literary journals in the Ukrainian language began active work: in Toronto – «Novi Dni» (editor-publisher Petro Volyniak), in Philadelphia – «Kyiv» (editor Bohdan Romanenchuk), in London – «Visnyk», and later «Vyzvolnyi Shliakh» (now edited by Illia Dmytriv). In Australia, the non-periodic almanacs «Novyi Obrii» were issued (editor-compiler Dmytro Nytychenko) [21, 567].

During 1991–2023 Ukrainians emigrated from Ukraine due to a combination of economic hardships, political instability, and military conflicts. After gaining independence in 1991, the country faced serious challenges in reforming its economy and building democratic institutions, which led to rising unemployment and a decline in living standards. Emigration was particularly intensified by the events of the Euromaidan in 2013–2014 and the subsequent war in eastern Ukraine, which created an atmosphere of uncertainty and security threats. The cultural and historical background, including the aspiration for European integration and freedom, as well as hopes for better living conditions abroad, further encouraged Ukrainians to leave the country.

Among diasporic representatives of this period we would like to analyze literary and translation works of Oksana Maksymchuk (1982), a poet and translator, with a PhD in ancient philosophy, who emigrated from Ukraine at the age of 15. Bringing contemporary Ukrainian poetry to the English-speaking world, she defines reading a poetry as a possibility to give one a bit of uncanny feeling, like one is learning author's language for the first time. O. Maksymchuk highlights that poetry is how language renews itself, while poets often take familiar words or phrases and make them strange, unfamiliar again [22].

Oksana Maksymchuk's debut collection of poetry in English, «Still City», was selected for the esteemed Pitt Poetry Series and published in 2024 by the University of Pittsburgh Press in the United States and Carcanet Press in the United Kingdom [23]. The abovementioned book discovers the effects of war on culture and was quite popular among readers, enough to be longlisted for both the 2025 Griffin Poetry Prize and the 2025 PEN/Voelcker Award for Poetry.

In addition to her original work, O. Maksymchuk co-edited the anthology «Words for War: New Poems from Ukraine» [24].

Among her short story translations there are texts by Kostiantyn Moskalets [25] and Tania Malyarchuk [26], [27], [28]. She translated a lot of poetic texts by Alex Averbuch, Oksana Humenyuk,

Lyuba Yakimchuk, Andriy Polyakov, Marianna Kiyanovska, Vasyl Stys, Serhii Zhadan.

She also co-translated several significant volumes, most recently Alex Averbuch's «Furious Harvests», published by Harvard University Press in 2025 [29].

O. Maksymchuk has received numerous honors for her contributions to translation. She was awarded a Translation Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 2019, as well as the Scaglione Prize for Literary Translation from the Modern Language Association in 2024.

The period which started in 2022 and continuing to the present is not represented in this study by any translator. The ongoing war has forced many Ukrainian female translators to abandon their homes and seek refuge abroad, leaving this space in the historiographical narrative intentionally vacant. This absence serves as a metaphorical reminder that Russia's aggression compels Ukrainian women to preserve their lives and identities through emigration.

The present study has illuminated the pivotal yet underacknowledged contributions of Ukrainian diasporic women translators to both national cultural preservation and the global literary landscape. Operating at the intersection of gender, diaspora, and translation, these translators have acted not only as linguistic intermediaries but as agents of cultural continuity, transformation, and advocacy. Their work evidences a deliberate engagement with the aesthetic, ideological, and political dimensions of translation, in line with feminist translation theories articulated by Sherry Simon, Olga Castro, and Louise von Flotow.

By foregrounding the lives and works of figures such as Olha Kosach-Kryvyniuk (Olesii Zirka), Nadia Syvorovtseva, Myrosia Stefaniuk, and Oksana Maksymchuk, this research restores their presence to a historiography that has too often erased or diminished women's roles in translation history. The analysis underscores that the Ukrainian diasporic school of translation – while shaped by displacement, multilingualism, and cross-cultural negotiation – also embodies a conscious resistance to androcentric literary norms and a redefinition of fidelity through a feminist lens.

This study not only bridges a critical lacuna in Ukrainian translation historiography but also positions the work of these translators within a broader global discourse on gender and translation. It calls for a sustained interdisciplinary scholarship that integrates gender studies, diaspora studies, and translation history to further examine the cultural and political agency of women translators in contexts of exile. Such scholarship is essential for advancing a more equitable and representative canon of translation history – one in which Ukrainian diasporic women translators are recognized as central contributors rather than marginal figures.

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Романчук А. Відомі й невідомі перекладачки: українська діаспорна школа

Анотація. У статті розглянуто тріадний зв'язок «гендер – жінки – переклад» крізь призму «культурного повороту» у перекладознавстві, де авторка зосереджується на історіографічному поверненні жіночих і феміністичних внесків до історії перекладу. У науковій розвідці звернено увагу на відсутність належного наукового вивчення діяльності перекладачок української діаспори, чий праці значною мірою залишаються невідомими й майже не дослідженими. Спираючись на теорію феміністського перекладу, зокрема на праці Шеррі Саймон, Ольги Кастро та Луїзи фон Фльотов, стаття контекстуалізує гендерні виміри перекладацьких практик у ширших соціокультурних і політичних рамках.

Українська діаспорна школа перекладу в статті представлена перекладацькою та літературною діяльністю чотирьох перекладачок: 1) Ольги Косач-Кривинюк (псевдонім – Олеся Зірка), 2) Надії Суворовцевої, 3) Миросі Стефанюк, 4) Оксани Максимчук. Для кожної з названих перекладачок подано коротку біографічну довідку. Культурна роль цих діаспорних перекладачок виходить за межі суто мовного посередництва: вони є важливими агентками збереження, інтерпретації та передавання національної літературної спадщини в нові культурні контексти. Попри вагомий внесок, ці перекладачки переважно залишаються поза основними історіографіями, а їхні імена й праці відсутні в каноні історії перекладу.

Стаття є своєрідною спробою вписати українських діаспорних перекладачок у глобальний дискурс феміністичного перекладу. Через текстуральний аналіз та історіографічну розвідку відтворено культурну агентність окремих українських діаспорних перекладачок, показано їхню роль у поєднанні української літератури з іноземною читацькою аудиторією з огляду на виклик андроцентричним нормам.

Отримані результати не лише заповнюють істотну прогалину в українській перекладознавчій історіографії, а й сприяють всеохопнішому розумінню перекладу як гендерованої культурної практики. Дослідження закликає до подальших міждисциплінарних студій, які інтегрують гендерну теорію, діаспорні студії та історію перекладу.

Ключові слова: феміністичний переклад, гендер і переклад, українська діаспора, жінки-перекладачі, культурний поворот, історіографія, діаспорна література.

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