

Title: Nation and Translation: Literary Translation as an Agent in Shaping Modern Ukrainian Culture

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It has been argued that Ukraine stands out among the fellow Slavic/East European nations due to the extent to which literary translation has played a pivotal role in shaping the modern national identity. Although vernacular translation stood at the root of many national literary traditions, the case of Ukraine, as Maksym Strikha argues in his recent history of Ukrainian literary translation, differs from its neighbors due to the nation's lengthy colonial status and the long-standing policy of bans and restrictions against the use of Ukrainian language promulgated by Russian imperial authorities. These traditions also explain why literary translators, such as Hryhorii Kochur and Mykola Lukash, were at the forefront of the dissident movement in Ukraine in the 1960s–1970s. Strikha argues that Ukrainian literary translation was not a form of asserting cultural power or escaping direct involvement in politically compromised activities, but a conscious project of resistance, and he traces this project from the beginning of the nineteenth century through the Soviet era. However, the epilogue of Strikha's book on the situation in the post-independence years does not tackle the changing fortunes of literary translation in today's Ukraine in a substantive way. The present paper intends to fill this gap. In the opening section, I offer a critical summary of Strikha's arguments, and then discuss the ways in which some of the leading contemporary Ukrainian authors (among them Yuri Andrukhovych, Volodymyr Dibrova, Oksana Zabuzhko, and Andrii Bondar) combine their activities as writers and literary translators, and offer a view of how their translation projects strive to take Ukrainian culture in a new direction in the context of postcolonial independence and engagement with the cultural aspects of globalization, building in part on the scholarly paradigms developed by Western scholars who bring translation studies into dialogue with postcolonial theory.

Works Cited

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