

Decoding Anglophone Translations of Ukrainian Literature: Colonial Echoes, Resilient Voices, and Narratives Unbound

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Research project

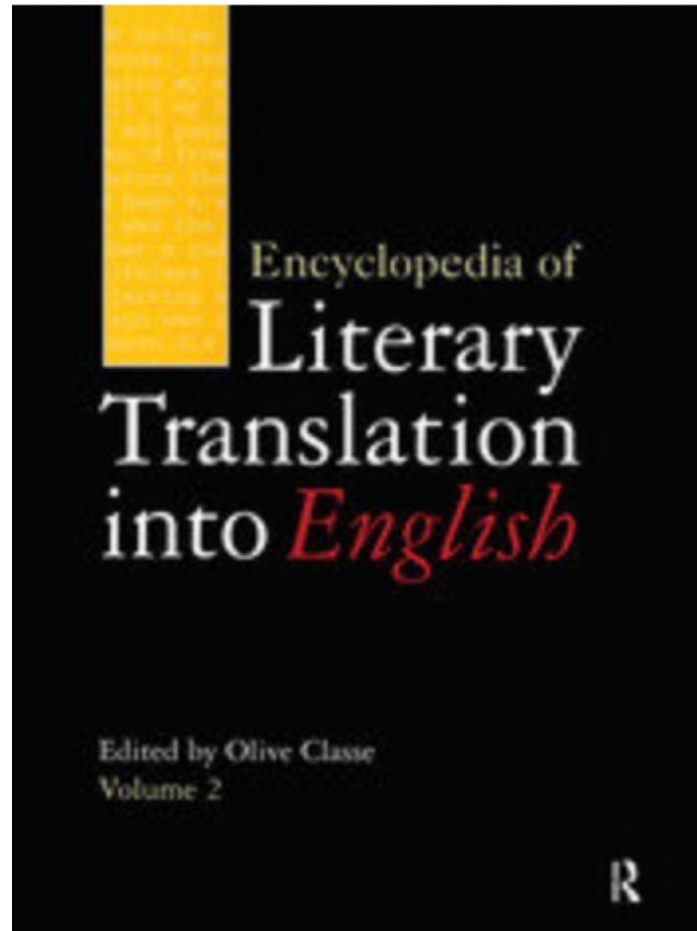
Ukrainian Literature in Anglophone Translation: Sociopolitical and Imagological Positioning



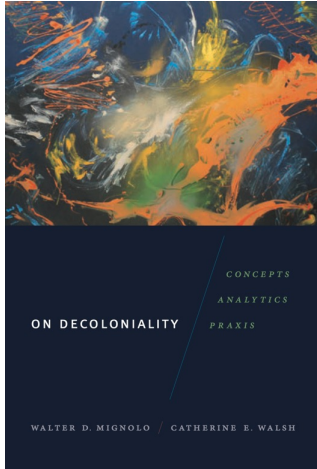
- the **first comprehensive study** of the sociocultural portrayal and transnational positioning of Ukrainian literature through the medium of English-language translation from the early 19th century to the present day
- **aim:** to showcase the intricate dynamics of how Ukrainian literature has been perceived, received, and discursively presented within the Anglophone sphere.
- **ambition:** to present an innovative and entangled cultural history of Ukrainian literature in dialogue with the Anglo-American audience.
- **first observations:** English translations have served both as lost keys, perpetuating a colonial legacy, and as open doors, ushering in opportunities for the decolonised expression of the Ukrainian narrative.

“discursive absence” (Rory Finnin)

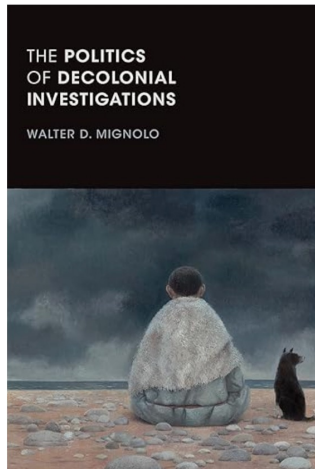
“zones of non-being” (Franz Fanon)



decoloniality



- Decoloniality is not a new paradigm or mode of critical thought. It is a way, an option, **an orientation, practice and praxis**.
- **Decolonisation** is a political project of the removal or undoing of colonial elements.
- **Decoloniality** is not so much a political project than it is an epistemological one: to **'delink' ourselves** from the structure of knowledge imposed ("colonial matrix"), and then to **'reconstitute' our ways** of thinking, speaking, and living.
- The major task of the politics of decolonial investigations—its "raison d'être"— is **to change the terms** in which the conversations on knowing, understanding, and existing take place.
- And changing the terms **means to change the questions** upon which Western knowledge and regulation of knowing are founded and to engage in epistemic reconstitution.

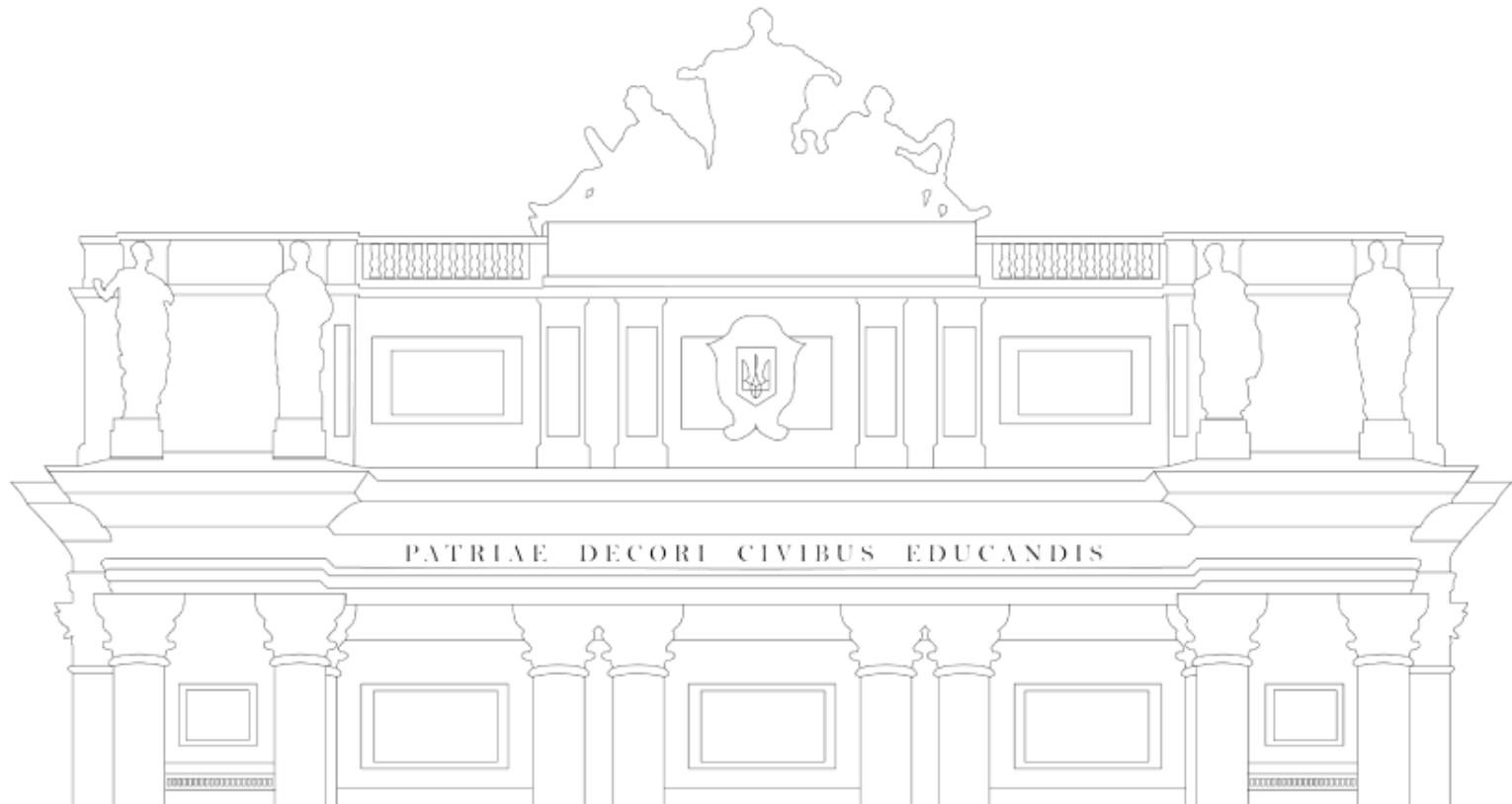


Decolonial analytics *my tentative proposal*

■ a four-step framework:

- (1) archeology of knowledge through (non-) translation, investigating the foundations of knowledge embedded in translation practices,
- (2) deconstructive reading of (non-)translations to unravel and critically analyze the power structures and inherent biases,
- (3) paratextual positioning of translation, exploring the underlying ideologies, and
- (4) re-existence, concluding with a re-evaluation of translational contribution to decolonial resistance.

epistemic humility



Translation and the Decolonial

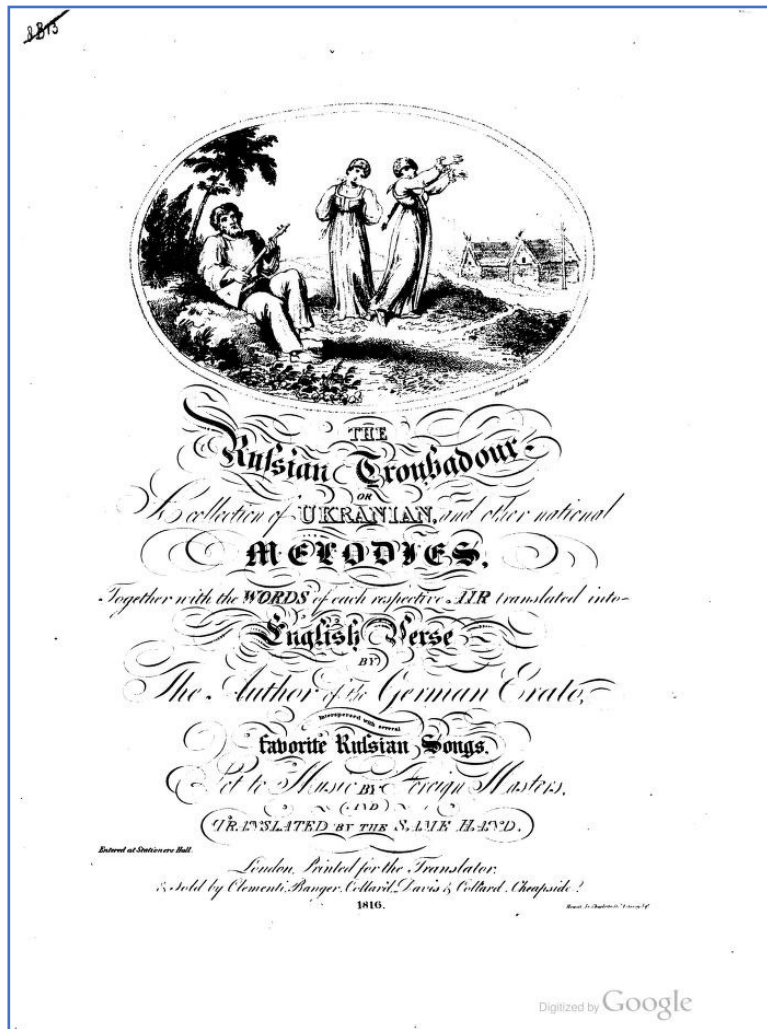
- Translation as a methodological lens for decolonial analytics
 - Translation as a decolonizing practice



Three prominent colonial strategies
in the history of translating Ukrainian works
via the Russian imperial / Soviet lens
into English

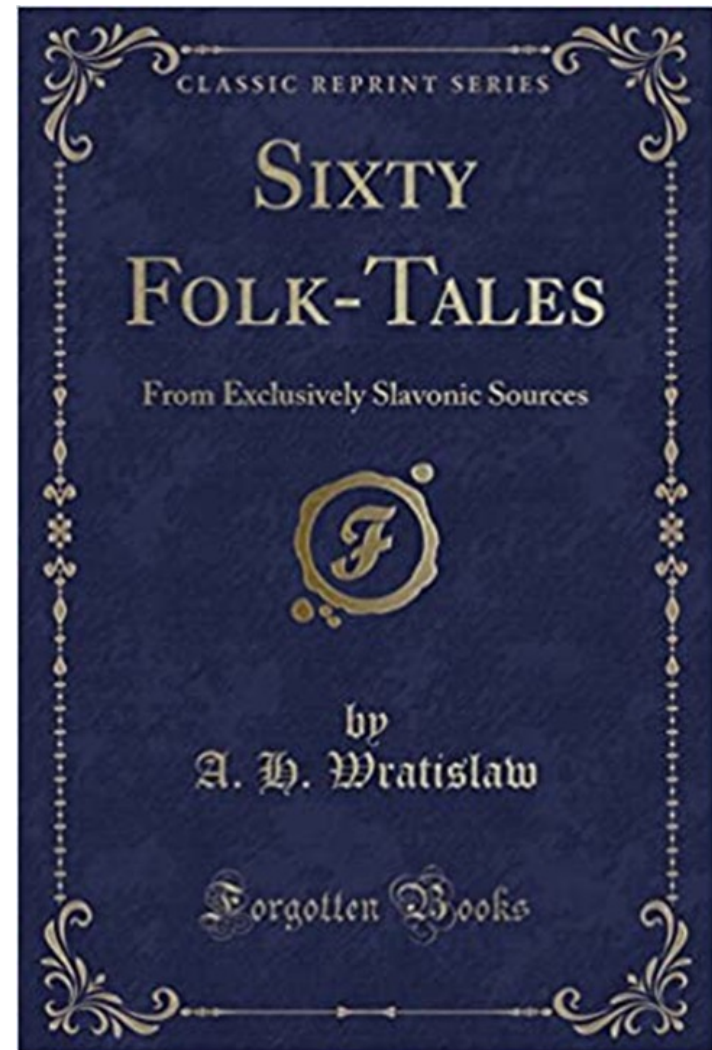
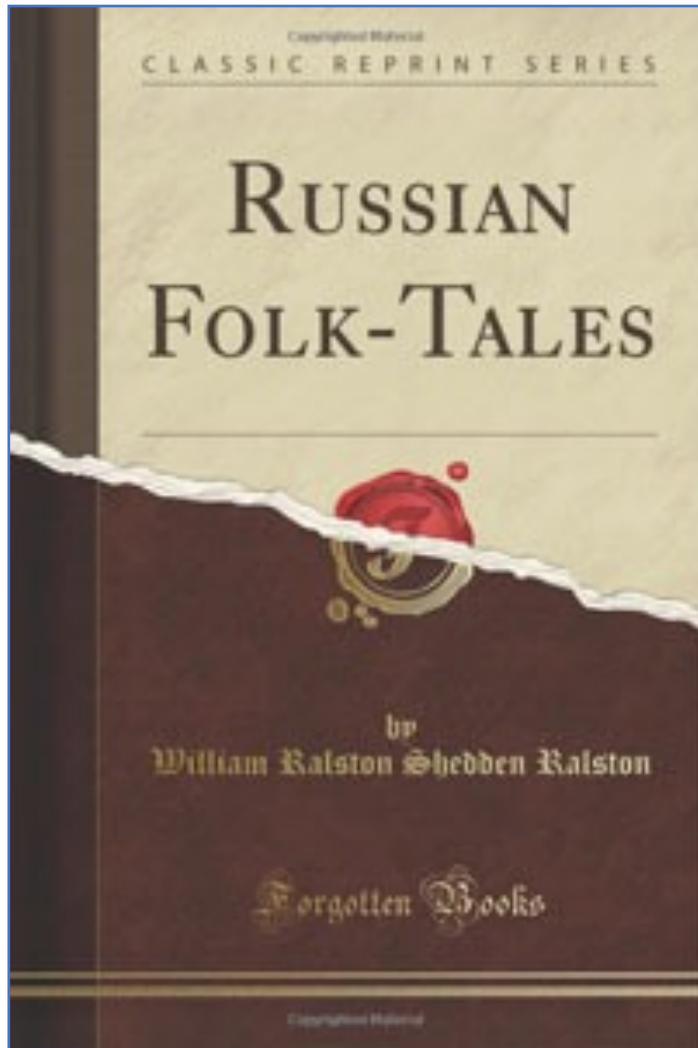
- cultural appropriation
- indirect translation into English through Russian
- centering on Russian imperial and Soviet recognition of the piece in its English-language publication

In 1816, Benjamin Beresford published a collection of Russian and Ukrainian songs in London.



- "The National Melodies of Russia"
- "The Ukraine has ever been the Provenance of the Russian Empire, and together with the White and the Lesser Russia still continues to be the nursery of national airs. The inhabitants of those districts may, indeed, be considered as the genuine Troubadours of the nation."

Further initiatives



1916 – Robert Nisbet Bain and his “Cossack Tales”



THEY CAME TO THE PLACE WHERE HE HAD LEFT HER
PAGE 79

COSSACK FAIRY TALES

AND FOLK TALES SELECTED
EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
R. NISBET BAIN ILLUSTRATED BY
NOEL L. NISBET



PUBLIC
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LONDON: GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO.
2 & 3 PORTSMOUTH STREET KINGSWAY W.C.
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INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE favourable reception given to my volume of *Russian Fairy Tales* has encouraged me to follow it up with a sister volume of stories selected from another Slavonic dialect extraordinarily rich in folk-tales—I mean Ruthenian, the language of the Cossacks.

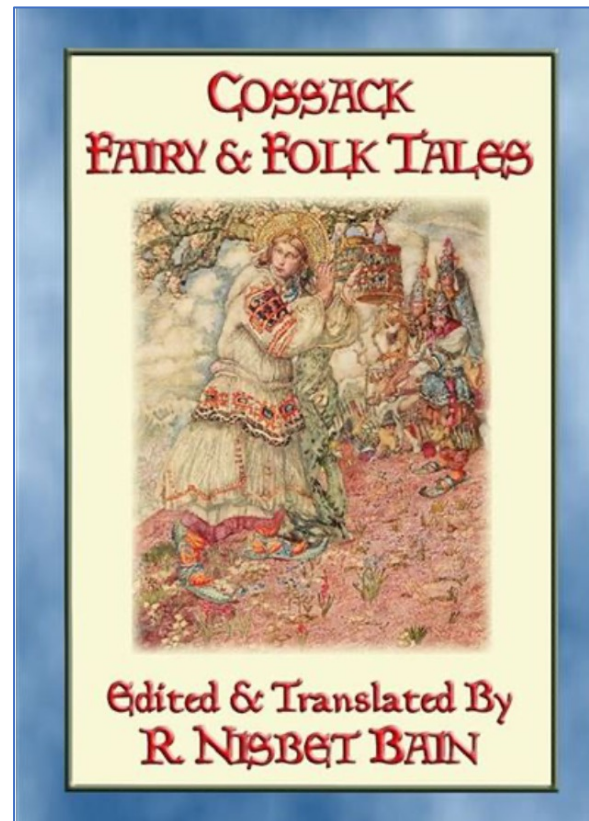
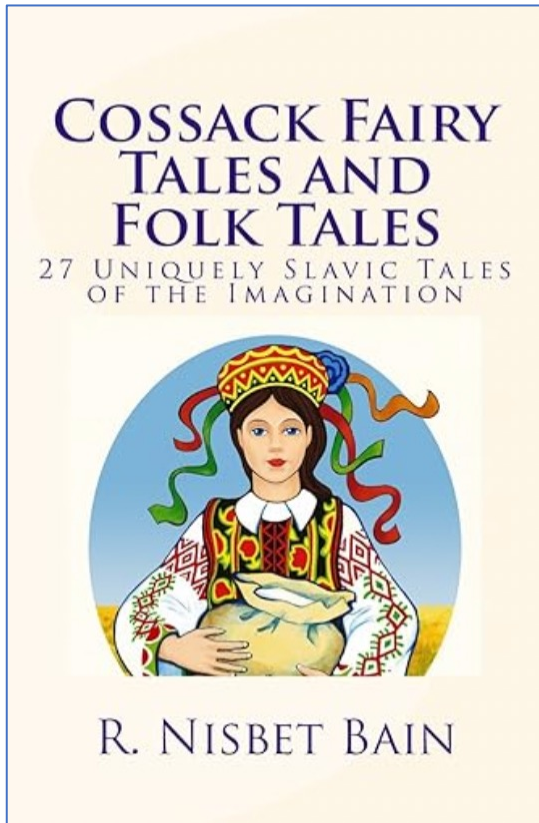
Ruthenian is a language intermediate between Russian and Polish, but quite independent of both. Its territory embraces, roughly speaking, that vast plain which lies between the Carpathians, the watershed of the Dnieper, and the Sea of Azov, with Lemberg and Kiev for its chief intellectual centres. Though it has been rigorously repressed by the Russian Government, it is still spoken by more than twenty millions of people. It possesses a noble literature, numerous folk-songs, not inferior even to those of Serbia, and, what chiefly concerns us now, a copious collection of justly admired folk-tales, many of them of great antiquity, which are regarded, both in Russia and Poland, as quite unique of their kind. Mr Ralston, I fancy, was the first to call the attention of the West to these curious stories, though the want at that time of a good Ruthenian dictionary (a want since supplied by the excellent lexicon of Zhelekhovsky and Nidilsky) prevented him from utilizing them. Another Slavonic scholar, Mr Morfill, has also frequently alluded to them in terms of enthusiastic but by no means extravagant praise.

The three chief collections of Ruthenian folk-lore are those of Kulish, Rudchenko, and Dragomanov,

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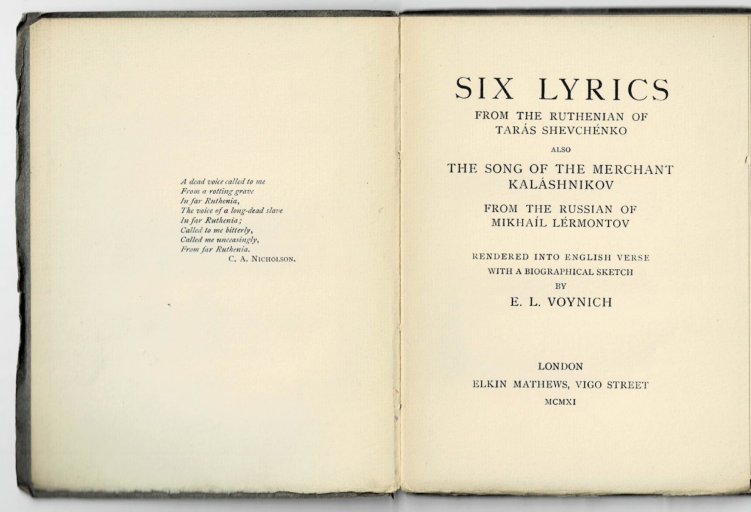
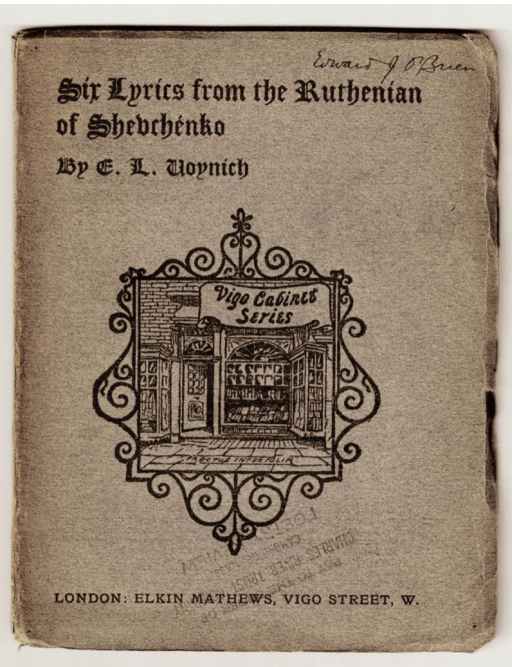
Contemporary editions



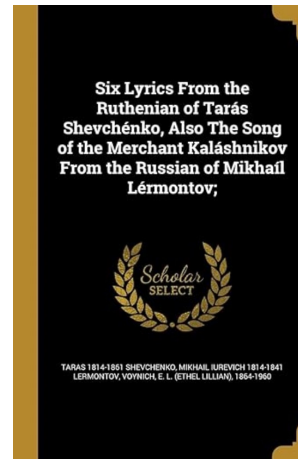
"The comparative isolation and primitiveness of the Cossacks, and their remoteness from the great theatres of historical events, would seem to be favourable conditions both for the safe preservation of old myths and the easy development of new ones..."



A shift in emphasis - 1911



- "From day to day, from night to night",
- "Only friend, clear evening twilight",
- "The Reaper",
- "Dig my grave and raise my barrow",
- "I care not, shall I see my dear",
- "Winter"



SONGS
of
UKRAINA

WITH RUTHENIAN POEMS

TRANSLATED BY
FLORENCE RANDAL
LIVESAY

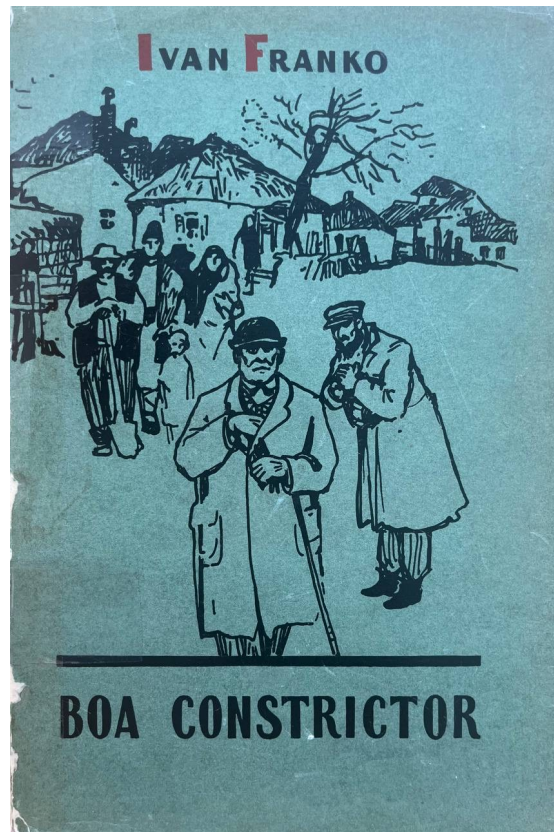


LONDON, PARIS & TORONTO
J. M. DENT & SONS LIMITED
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.
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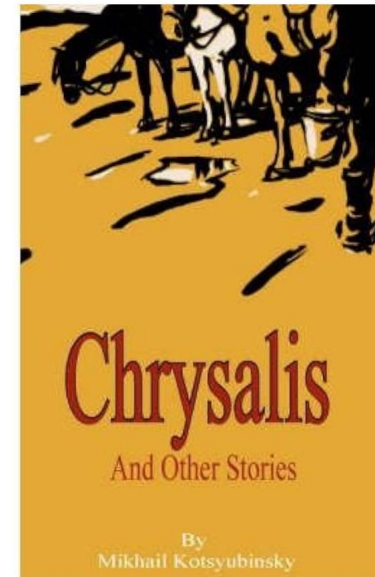
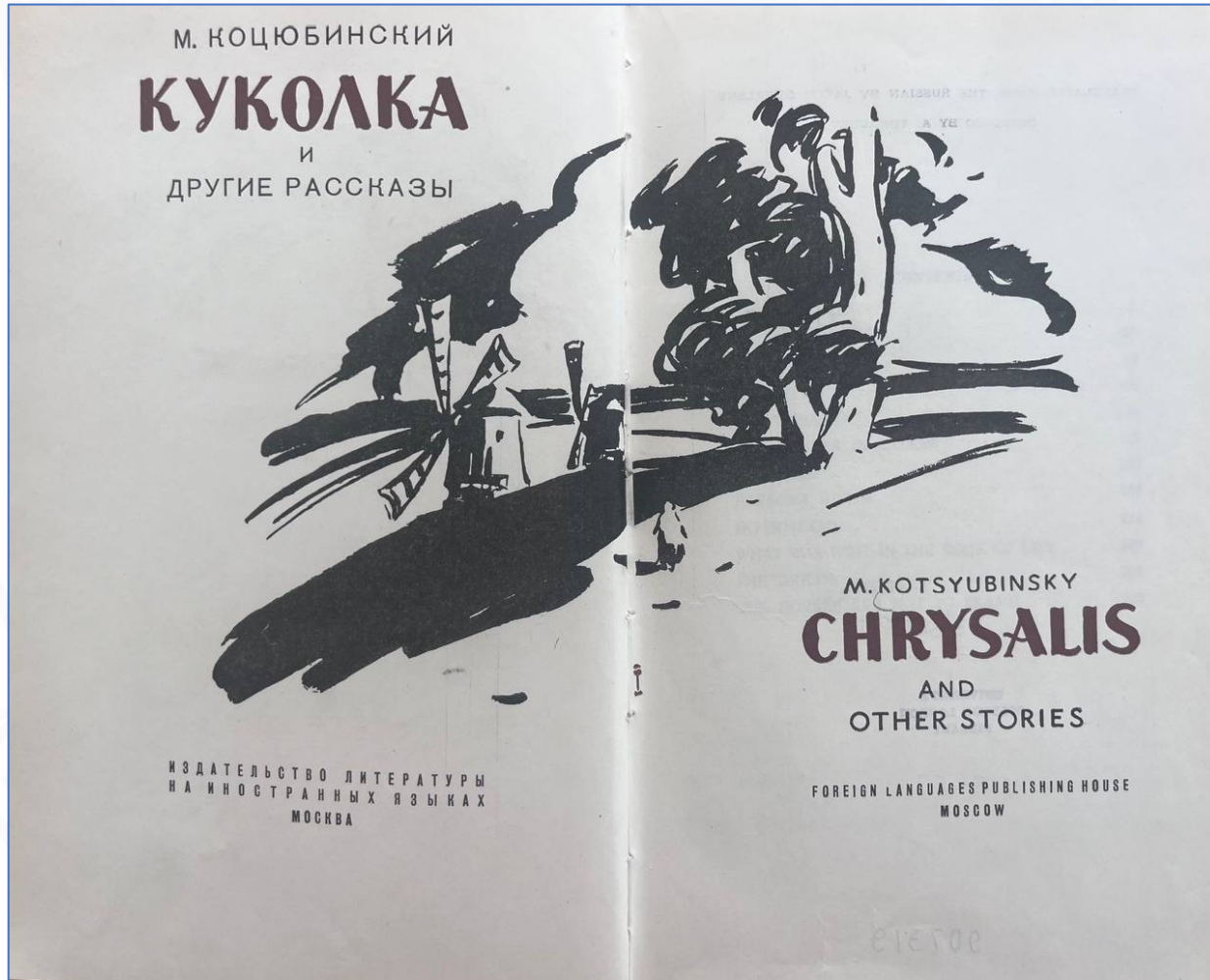
1916

477434
19.11.43

indirect translation into English through Russian



from indirect translation to Soviet "inscription"



"In the world of ideas, beauty and sheer goodness, he is 'ones's own man,' a kindred spirit who quickens the urge to see him as often and talk to him as much as possible from the very first time one meets him.

"Having pondered all things, he is related some how to all that is good, and organically at war whit all that is evil. His aesthetic reaction to Good has developed to a great degree of subtlety. He Loves Good whit the fervour of an artist and believes unreservedly in its victorious potential. The citizen so alive within him is deeply aware of all aspects of Good, of its cultural purport and historic weight."

M. Gorky



parallel narratives

SKOVORODA

THE WORLD TRIED TO CATCH ME,
BUT COULD NOT



Daniel H. Shubin

Who was Grigori Savvich Skovoroda according to those who knew him and those of his era?

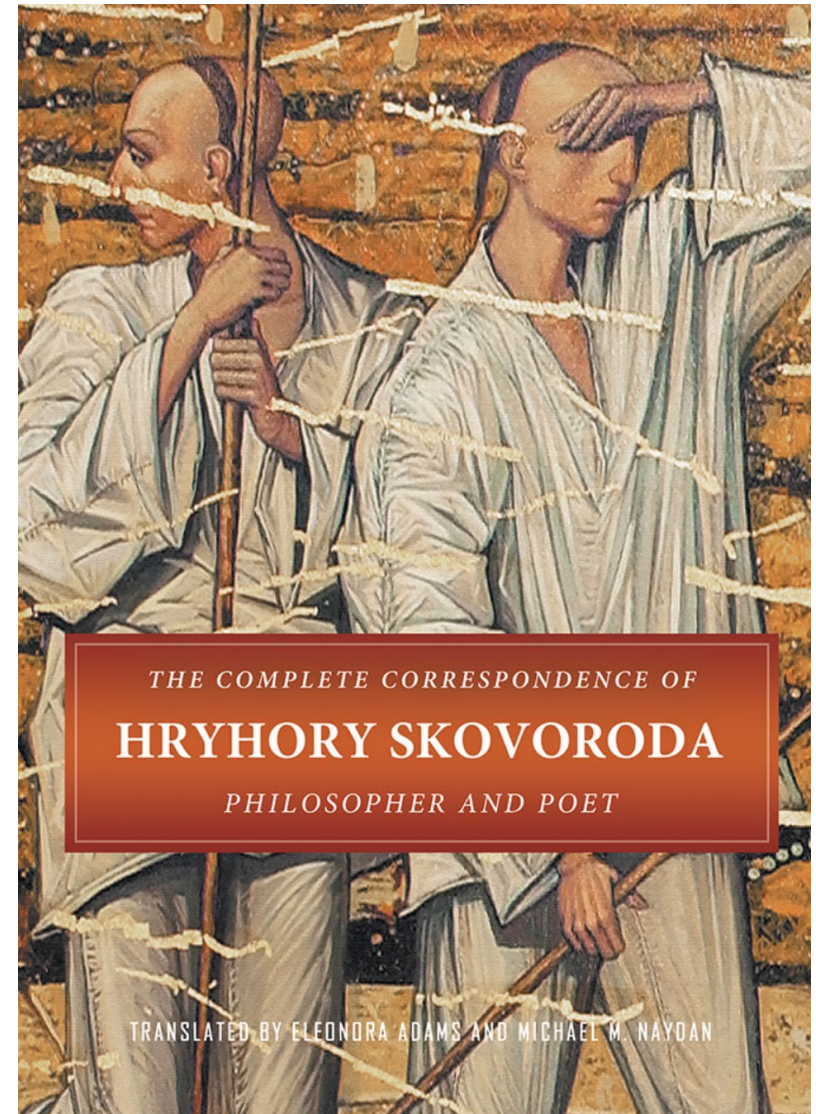
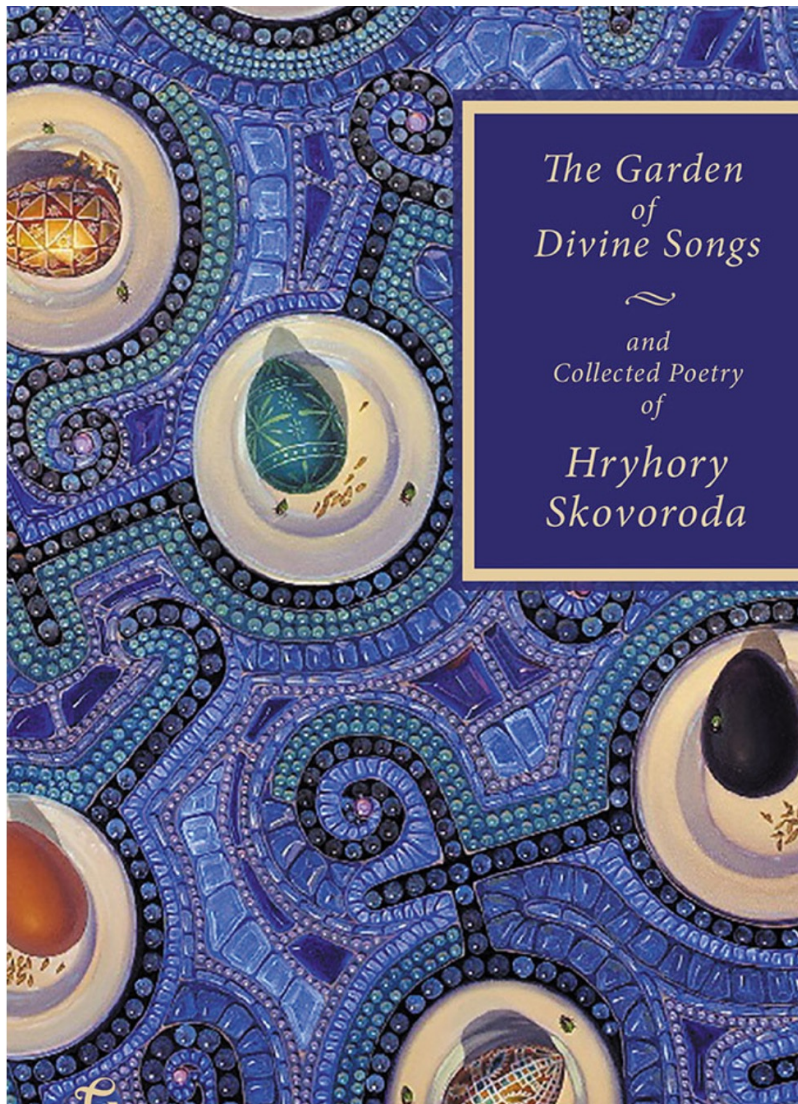
- "I would call him a Russian Socrates."
- "He was a Stoic philosopher and the Diogenes of Kharkov."
- "Skovoroda was a clandestine father of early Slavanophilism."
- "One of the first peasant democrats in Russia."
- "The first philosopher on Russian soil in the true sense of the word."
- "An apostle of rationalism."
- "A rationalistic mystic if he can be explained in such a manner."
- "A true son of the rationalist age of enlightenment."
- "A version of Christian Platonism in the patristic tradition."
- "He was an eclectic, loose collection of ideas."

Grigori Savvich Skovoroda: Philosopher, roamer and Christian humanist. A person that all philosophers wish to become. He was a mental giant and scholarly genius, and the exceptional talents he possessed provided him the means for philosophic success preaching his form of Christian humanism: his profound mind, phenomenal memory, poetic and prosaic creativity, and his ability to play several musical instruments. Along with knowing the Russian and Ukrainian languages, Skovoroda was fluent in Hebrew, German, Latin and Greek, and possessed a photographic memory of the Bible.

Daniel H. Shubin has in the past published several volumes on Russian history, mysticism, religion and philosophy, Christian pacifism, and Bible interpretation.

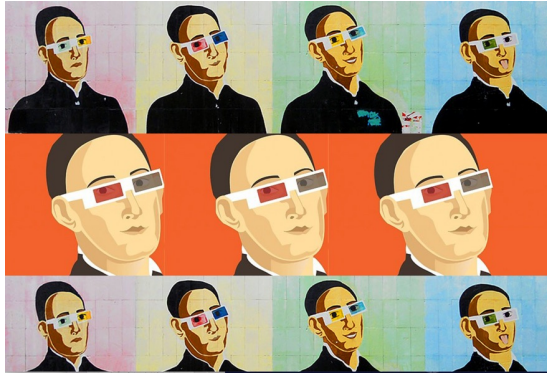


parallel narratives





Archeology of knowledge

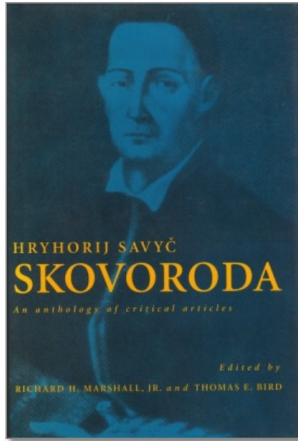


- Jaroslaw Rudnyc'kyj underscored the existence of what he termed as "a **conspiracy of silence**" against Skovoroda which continued to obscure him from the ranks of the world's most noted philosophers:

*... it should be stressed that unlike his great contemporaries, J.J. Rousseau, Denis Diderot, Francois Marie Voltaire, Immanuel Kant, and others,
Skovoroda is mostly unknown to basic Western reference works (e.g. Encyclopedia Britanica, Grolier, Chamber's etc) or to most compendia of the history of world philosophy*



*Tribute to Skovoroda. The Ukrainian Review.
London, The Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain,
1973*



Hryhorij Savyc Skovoroda

An Anthology of Critical Articles

Edited by Thomas E. Bird and Richard H. Marshall

BOOK DETAILS

Publication date: January 1994

Keywords: Ukrainian Philosophy / Philosophy of Religion

Subject(s): LITERARY CRITICISM / European / Eastern, Literary Studies, Literary Studies / Literary Criticism, Philosophy, Social Sciences, Social Sciences / Religious Studies, Area Studies, Area Studies / Ukrainian Studies, Ukrainian Philosophy / Philosophy of Religion, Art, Philosophy, PHILOSOPHY / Religious, Philosophy of religion, Ukrainian Philosophy / Philosophy of Religion

Publisher(s): CIUS Press

Мова Сковороди — якщо відняти її сильні біблійно-церковні впливи, її яскраві поетично-індивідуальні особливості — є, в основі своїй, **слобожанським варіантом нормативної російської мови**, якою розмовляли в тогочасних освічених колах. Сковорода постійно спілкувався з цими колами, саме в них знаходив своїх читачів та однодумців. Від них він залежав навіть матеріально. Ці люди (а не селяни) були його питомим середовищем. Поки ми цього не зрозуміємо, доти дивитимемось на його мову як на головолонний покруч.

Мусимо зняти романтично-народницькі окуляри з очей.

Shevelov, George.
Prolegomena to Studies of Skovoroda's Language and Style

З англійської переклала Марія Габлевич.



ЛЬВІВСЬКИЙ
УНІВЕРСИТЕТ

Thank you for attention!

Дякую за увагу!

