

# “Literature of Migration” vs “Literatura Emihratsii”: Defining a New Trend in Ukrainian Literature

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## ABSTRACT

The author identifies 19 literary publications about Ukrainian women emigrants and women’s emigration, published in Ukraine and elsewhere between 2000 and 2013. Considering lack of consistency and unanimously accepted terminology when describing these publications, the author suggests to consider the identified texts a separate literary trend worthy of consideration. Following a brief overview of the existing terminology about “(e)migration” and “literature” in a European context, the author proposes to use Adelson’s term “literature of migration” as the most suitable thematic and descriptive term with which to analyze the recent literary explorations of women’s emigration from Ukraine.

**Keywords:** *literature of migration, zarobitchanstvo, emigration literature, interkulturelle Literatur, interlinguale Literatur, migration literature, diasporic literature, Migrantenliteratur, women’s emigration, Ukrainian emigration.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the early 2000s, during the fourth (or fifth) wave of Ukrainian emigration,<sup>1</sup> Ukrainian literary writers have shown a renewed interest in the topic of Ukrainian emigration. Unlike their predecessors, however, contemporary authors appear to focus their literary efforts on the lived experiences of Ukrainian emigrant women. Ukrainian women emigrants are central characters in the following literary works: *Kolektsiia prystrastei, abo pryhody molodoii*

*ukraïinky* (Collection of passions or adventures of a young Ukrainian<sub>female</sub>)<sup>2</sup> (2001) and *Frau Müller ne nalashtovana platyty bil’she* (Mrs. Müller has no intentions of paying more) by Natalka Sniadanko (2013), *Na paperti kolizeiu* (At the Coliseum’s porch) by Nadiia Semenkovich (2003), *Usi dorohy vedut’ do Rymu* (All roads lead to Rome) by Olesia Halych (2004), *Dushi v ekzyli* (Souls in exile) by Lesia Bilyk (2012),<sup>3</sup> *Internaimychka: dochka chy paserbytsia Ievropy?* (Intermaid: Europe’s daughter or stepdaughter?) by Orest Berezovs’kyi (2004), *Tsarivna ne place: pravdyva istoriia z zhyttia*

<sup>1</sup> Many researchers identify four waves of Ukrainian emigration with the fourth wave starting in the 1990s and lasting for at least 20 years Khachatryan [42], Kukurudza & Romashchenko [46], Shokalo [55], Kudlak [45], Odynets’ [49], Demydenko [35], Hrods’ka [39]. Cherepanova & Davydiuk [30], however, argue that the fourth wave of Ukrainian emigration began in the 1980s and lasted until the economic crisis of 2008. According to the same authors, the fifth wave began its formation in 2009. Borysenko & Tarasenko [29], in their turn, pinpoint the beginning of the beginning of the fifth wave in 2013 and link it to the devaluation of the hryvnia, high

levels of unemployment and most importantly the unstable political situation in the Eastern Ukraine.

<sup>2</sup> All translations herein are mine unless indicated otherwise. All titles are primarily translated using direct translation (word-by-word) in order to transmit their meanings accurately.

<sup>3</sup> In 2004, Lesia Bilyk published the story *Usi dorohy vedut’ do Rymu* separately using the pen name Olesia Halych. In 2012, she included this story as Part 1 in her novel-trilogy *Dushi v ekzyli*.

*ukraiins'kykh zarobitchan v Itali* (Princess doesn't cry: a true story from the life of Ukrainian emigrant workers in Italy) by Halyna Dribniuk (2005), *Lysty synovi, abo lehendy Neapolitans'kykh hir* (2005) (Letters to son or legends of the Neapolitan mountains) and *Ne vyplach moieii sl'ozy* (2006) (Don't cry out my tear) by Oksana Proniuk, *Voglio un marito italiano. Dall'Est per amore?* (I want an Italian husband: from the East for love?) by Marina Sorina (2006), *Korotka istoriia traktoriv po-ukraiins'ky* (2013)<sup>4</sup> (A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian (2005)) and *Dva furhony* (2008)<sup>5</sup> (Two Caravans (2007)) by Marina Lewycka, *Shliub iz kukhlem pil'zens'koho pyva* (Marriage to a mug of Pilsner beer) by Lesia Stepovychka (2007), *Chotyry dorohy* (Four roads) by Lesia Romanchuk (2008), *Same ta* (The one<sub>female</sub>) by Iosyp Salalsh (2008), *Trymai mene, kovzanko* (Hold me, skating rink) by Mariia Tkachivs'ka (2008), *Tvoia dytynka* (Your baby) by Irysia Lykovych (2010), *Ia znaiu, shcho ty znaiesh, shcho ia znaiu* (I know that you know that I know) by Irena Rozdobud'ko (2011), and *Hastarbaiterky* (Guest Workers<sub>female</sub>) by Natalka Doliak (2012).<sup>6</sup>

Most of these literary publications are from small presses with limited print runs and represent contemporary women's writing both in Ukraine and abroad. These novels and short stories offer a variety of emigrant experiences from different perspectives and geographic locations. Even though these are works of fiction, they raise issues of performative migrant or hybrid identity, national identity negotiation, displacement, nostalgia, gendered nationalism, and woman's sacrifice, which appear to be very productive subjects for discussion in literary, sociological, and cultural studies. The reams of published works on emigration in general and Ukrainian women emigrants in particular allows us to speak of a new trend in Ukrainian literature. Along with the novels and short stories that constitute the basis for the present project, the so-called genre of "emigrant folklore" and theatrical plays have

<sup>4</sup> Ukrainian translation was published in 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Ukrainian translation was published in 2008.

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that the above listed 19 publications are the ones whose paper or electronic copies I was able to obtain in the course of this research. The list is by no means exhaustive and may be limited due to my restricted access to Ukrainian publications. For those interested in further exploration of the topic, the following publications came to my attention but were not included in this study: *Z variahy v hreky, abo istoriia, nakreslena*

prominently featured issues faced by Ukrainian emigrants. For example, the play "Naples: City of Cinderellas" by Nadia Kovalyk was first staged by the Lviv-based National Drama Theatre in 2003.

In the past two decades, the topic of globalization has given rise to a broad discussion of such related issues as migration and multiculturalism across the humanities and social sciences. In literary studies, focus is usually placed on "migrant literature" or "marginal literature" [62], which explores the place and contributions of immigrant writers to the literature of receiving countries. My corpus focuses on the sending country generally and emigrants and emigration from Ukraine specifically.

My research revealed that some of the identified texts had already been studied by literary scholars and mentioned by sociologists. However, no single and unanimously accepted definition has been proposed to identify these publications as a new and distinct literary trend. I propose to use Adelson's [26] term "literature of migration" as a thematic and descriptive term with which to analyze the recent literary phenomenon of these women inspired and women authored texts. I reference the existing terminology about "(e)migration" and "literature" and discuss the suitability of the term "literature of migration" when discussing the concept in a Ukrainian context, thus describing the above identified literary corpus and ensuring a certain level of consistency in future research. This article highlights the terms' historical development and underscores the need for new terminology when dealing with the imbrication of literature and emigration in a Ukrainian context in the early 2000s. I briefly describe my selected literary texts and categorize them as a separate literary trend that emerged in Ukrainian literature in the above stated time period.

*runamy* (From the Varangians to the Greeks) by Ieva Hata [7], *Nian'ka-nen'ko. Zi shchodennyka zarobitchanky* (Nanny-Mommy. From the diary of an emigrant worker<sub>female</sub>) by Oksana Drachkovs'ka [4], *Vin: rankovyi prybyral'nyk. Vona: shosti dveri* (He: morning cleaner. She: sixth door) by Irena Rozdobud'ko [15], *Artemida z lanniu ta inshi novely* (Artemis with a hind and other short stories) by Liudmyla Taran [23], *Ianhol z Ukrainy. Malen'ki romany, novely* (Angel from Ukraine. Short novels, stories) by Halyna Tarasiuk [24], *Naiada* by Mariia Iukhno [8].

## 2. CONCEPTS DESCRIBING THE OVERLAP OF “LITERATURE” AND “MIGRATION” IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Representing a variety of approaches, literary theorists and critics worldwide have discussed “emigrant literature” [36], “marginal literature” [62], “interkulturelle Literatur” (intercultural literature) or “interlinguale Literatur” (interlingual literature) [32], “Migrantenliteratur” (migrant’s literature), “Migrationsliteratur” (migration literature)<sup>7</sup> [53], “migration literature” [48], [38], “immigration (diaspora) literature” [63], [33], and “literature of migration” [26], [27].<sup>8</sup> I choose to focus on these specific concepts (and not on more recent ones) for the following reasons. First, they allow me to demonstrate the historical development and conceptualization of literature and migration confluence in a European context. This overview is relevant to the discussion of appropriate terminology in a Ukrainian context considering the specific literary trend emerging in the country in the early 2000s. Second, this article focuses on writing about emigrants/emigration from the sending country Ukraine, which sets it apart from the concepts and perspectives on immigrant writers/writing elaborated by scholarship in receiving countries. Below, I present an overview of the above-listed concepts and their key features in conversation with Adelson’s ideas on “literature of migration” [26], [27]. In my view, these concepts are not interchangeable, even though some studies suggest otherwise. While all of them attempt to nuance theoretical frameworks in order to categorize “hard-to-categorize” texts, they present each term as representing a distinct understanding of the “literature” and “migration” dyad that mirrors the sociocultural and political climate of the author(s)’ country of origin. As Rösch [53] indicated in her work: “These [Migrantenliteratur, Migrationsliteratur, Interkulturelle Literatur] are working concepts elaborated to approach those texts and their authors that cannot be easily fitted in the existing categories and also indicate a new context and problematic which

should be taken into consideration when analysing and theorizing this new type of literature [literature of and about migration]” (p.90).

I have identified three research foci in the scholarly discourse that define the theme of migration in literary texts: a. authors’ origin and biography, b. context of literary works (migration), and c. language of writing. For instance, the terms “Migrationsgeschichte” [64] and “Migrantenliteratur” [53], “migration literature” [48], and “emigration literature” [36] describe literature of migrants with a varying focus on writers’ status in their countries of residence at the time of literature’s publication. The concepts “immigrant literature” [60], “Migrationsliteratur” [53], “migrant literature” and “literature of migration” [38] define literary works that explore the topic of migration regardless of the writers’ origin and relationship to the country of literature’s publication. The terms “interkulturelle Literatur,” “interlinguale Literatur” [53], [32] and “diasporic literature” [33] highlight the importance of language of writing rather than writers’ birthplace. I present a more detailed discussion of the outlined foci and terminology below.

### *2.1 Role of authors’ origin and biography in defining migration discourse in literary texts*

Authors’ origin and biography are key factors in how Yano [64] and Rösch [53] define migration discourses in literature. Discussing the German context of migration literature, these two researchers use the terms “Migrationsgeschichte” [64, p. 1] and “Migrantenliteratur” [53, p. 89]. Both recognize migration literature as literary works produced by migrants, which indicates the status of the author in the country where their work was published. Yano [64] states that “[m]igration narratives’ of the Federal Republic of Germany include the works not only of the so-called “Gastarbeitern”, but also written by other foreigners; lately, this group also embraces repatriates, i.e., Germans from Eastern Europe” (p. 1). Rösch [53] elaborates that “[m]igrants’ literature’ is used to describe literature written by migrants and is considered to be an offshoot of the concept ‘foreign

<sup>7</sup> It is possible to translate “Migrationsliteratur” also as “literature of migration” due to the peculiar compound word formation in German. However, I choose to translate it as “migration literature” in order to demonstrate the differences between the two concepts and avoid any confusion.

<sup>8</sup> A wealth of additional and important scholarly work has since emerged on texts produced outside the boundaries of one’s nation/state. However, new

perspectives and concepts of “New World Literature” [61], “ex(tra)territoriality” [47], transculturality and mobility [34], writing in-between worlds, and literature of movement [37], [50], to name just a few, reflect migratory patterns and issues that are not addressed in the texts selected for the current study.

<sup>9</sup> “Migration narratives”

literature” (p. 91). The researcher finds the concept problematic “as it defines those authors who have spent the majority of their lives in Germany or were even born and raised here as foreigners or migrants” [53, p. 91].

Even though both researchers use either the prefix “migrant-” or the noun “migrants” when referring to writers and their texts, each ascribes a different meaning to this category. Yano’s [64] interpretation reflects the historic development of this type of literature in Germany, first introduced by guest workers who were later referred to as “ethnic, cultural, or language minorities” (p. 1),<sup>10</sup> demonstrating a certain political correctness.<sup>11</sup> Regarding Rösch’s “Migrantenliteratur,” we see that “Migranten” appear to be both the so-called first-wave immigrants and their children, who are legally German citizens but who are classified as “foreigners.” Interestingly, both definitions underline the foreignness of migrants’ literature (narratives). This indicates the both “Migranten” and their “Literatur” have been excluded from typically “German” cultural spaces. Moreover, the term “Migrantenliteratur” alludes to the difficulty of classifying German-language literature written by ethnically non-German authors and speaks to our understanding of nation states as uniform and largely homogenous ethnic formations. In this case, I find it more appropriate to use the term “immigration literature,” which potentially signals a relationship between the receiving country and the cultural and linguistic “Other.” The very definition of an “immigrant” as a “person who comes to live permanently in a *foreign* country” (Oxford dictionary; emphasis is mine) points at the extraneity of newcomers and their lived experiences. Taking into consideration the commonly negative image of immigrants in their host countries, a more general “migration literature” is less controversial though not necessarily more precise.<sup>12</sup>

Referring to the wider European context of “migration literature,” Merolla and Ponzanesi [48] identify such texts as a literary corpus produced by “artists operating beyond national parameters” (p. 1). “Migration literature” is defined through the authors’ dislocation and/or absence from a national literary scene. This is somewhat different from the definition

inspired by the German context discussed earlier, as it does not highlight the alien status of the writers within those “national parameters.” Merolla and Ponzanesi [48] also wonder whether migrant literature can ever be studied “without having to pass via the national canon” [48, p. 4]. This suggests that migrant texts can serve as a separate genre within a European literary space regardless of their language or country of production.

In this first category, where research focuses on authors’ origins and biographies, I would partially include the term “emigration literature,” developed by Duffy [36] in reference to his native Ireland. He refers to “emigration literature” as a large corpus of autobiographical literary works that include either an explicit or implicit reference to the author’s personal emigration. Unlike the previous examples from the German literary and migration context, Duffy does not refer to this type of literature as alien. The concept of “emigration literature” itself provides an opposite perspective on “literature and migration”: that of the sending country. This understanding defines “emigration literature” based on the literary traces of the authors’ personal life experiences. Duffy [36] also argues that general fiction produced by national writers at home or abroad “reflects either directly or indirectly on emigration as a reality of life” and can also be characterized as “emigration literature” [36, p. 21].

## 2.2 Role of context in defining migration discourse in literary texts

The content category includes a definition by Stanišić [60], who in his discussion of “immigrant literature” defines it by the “subject matter, and in relation to the literary premises of genre, style, [and] tradition” (p. 10) and not by migrant writers’ biographies and their origins. In his analysis of migrant literature myths, Stanišić argues that even though most migrant writers prefer to talk about their own migrant experiences, writing about migration is neither the only nor the exclusive topic of migrant literature. Similarly, in order to write about migration one does not need to relocate to another country.

<sup>10</sup> “etnische, kulturelle oder sprachliche Minderheiten”

<sup>11</sup> Referring to guest workers as “ethnic, cultural, or language minorities” demonstrates Yano’s attempt to avoid the negative connotation associated with the term “guest worker.”

<sup>12</sup> Yano [64] addresses the issue of hostility towards immigrants in twentieth century Germany in which the very presence of foreigners in the country was most frequently referred to in the media as a serious “problem” (p.14).

Frank's [38] theses on literature and migration are based on Stanišić's field broadening definition. He points out that the figure of the migrant first appeared in twentieth century literature, which in turn led to an increase in the number of migrant authors who shared their own migrant experiences with global audiences [38, pp. 41-43]. This tendency further defined contemporary literary historiography, which organized texts according to "national ideas of authorial belonging" (p. 43). Urging researchers to revisit the now outdated classification of the literary/migrant corpus, Frank [38] insists on shifting our focus from an authors' birthplace to the "thematic and formal" levels of their writing (p. 44). "The relationship between the literary content and style" represented by these two levels offers insight into the process of hybridizing and transforming migrant identities (the thematic level) through a multitude of voices, languages, and narrative forms (the formal level) [38, p. 52]. Disregarding authors' ethnicity leads to another valid observation: "[i]n an age of migration all literature, written by migrants as well as non-immigrants, is potentially a literature of migration" [38, p. 52].

It should be noted that in his explorations of literature and migration, Frank uses the terms "migrant literature" and "literature of migration" interchangeably. While I accept both his arguments and his eagerness to review the first principles of the literary historiography of the literature of migration, precise terminology should be developed that adequately describes and classifies the literary corpus of migration. A shared scholarly vocabulary when referring to literary texts written by or about migrants will ensure consistency in research and will minimize confusion as the field of migrant/emigrant literature continues to develop.

As defined by Rösch, the term "Migrationsliteratur" is similar to Stanišić's understanding of "(im)migrant literature" and Frank's discussion of literature and migration:

[t]he concept 'Migrationsliteratur' clearly differs from 'Migrantenliteratur' and demonstrates that there are also immigrant and minority writers who do not produce any 'Migrationsliteratur'. Even though the existing research focuses on the intersection of 'Migranten-' and 'Migrationsliteratur', the term 'Migrationsliteratur' is open to local writers who explore the topic [of migration] in their individual works thus broadening the field of 'Migrationsliteratur'. To define a text as belonging to 'Migrationsliteratur' one does not need to make

a reference to the author's biography, only the text and its content matter. In this respect, 'Migrationsliteratur' is defined as literature about migration (and its influence on individuals and society in general). [53, pp. 93-94]

People in the twenty-first century continue to experience increased levels of mobility, displacement, and deracination. These global phenomena are reflected in literature when writers "migrate" across thematic and formal borders irrespective of their nationality or ethnicity. While Rösch's [53], Stanišić [60], and Frank [38] identify a separate niche for both local and foreign authors to write about migration, the terms offered by the researchers do not specify language(s) in which this type of literature is generally published. The following subsection addresses inter- and multilinguality of migration literature.

### *2.3 Role of language of writing in defining migration discourse in literary texts*

The role of language of writing in defining the literature of migration is represented by two interrelated and commonly interchangeable terms: "interkulturelle Literatur" and "interlinguale Literatur" Rösch [53], Chiellino [32]. These two concepts, similar to "Migrationsliteratur" and "migrant literature," originate in a German context and focus on migration, and not the authors' experience as migrants. However, these concepts stand out as they introduce language as the defining element of the "in-between" space this literature occupies: "In the more general meaning, this literature deals with cultural overlaps and a multilingual literary movement" [32, p. 51]. According to Chiellino, intercultural and/or interlingual writings elaborate a number of topics, such as:

narratives with a personal pre-history, which led to emigration, exile or repatriation; travels abroad; encounters with a foreign culture, society and language; a project of developing a new, equal identity between citizens of the unknown country and newcomers; inclusion into the workplace and everyday life of the receiving country, i.e. the old and the new motherland; narrative with a political development in the sending country; gender specific observations of one's staying in different ethnic surroundings with different priorities and life goals. [32, p. 58]

In the Italian context, the term "diasporic literature" also refers to interculturality, defined as "writings linked to the ex-colonies and those by

authors from other countries, all expressing a transcultural condition” [33, pp. 64-65]. In her discussion of the marginalization of “diasporic literature,” Curti notes that bilingualism is a characteristic feature of literature written by migrants themselves or in creative tandem with Italian writers: “Works written in collaboration with Italians have been quite widespread in Italy due to the linguistic difficulties encountered by the first-generation migrants. This has often led to these writings being assigned to the category of inferior literature, although others see in this meeting of two authors an important cultural significance” (Portellin, 2004, quoted in [33], p. 68). A closer look allows us to identify two additional foci in the discussion of the topic of migration and literature:

- a. literary texts authored by migrants or about migration are discussed from the perspective of the national state. This positioning tries to establish this literature’s place and role in the national literature of each respective country
- b. second research focus represents a global aspect of migration and world literature in general.

Stanišić and other authors discussed above are representatives of the “national-state” framing of migration and literature. Stanišić argues that regardless of the name, “migrant, immigrant, intercultural or multicultural literature today (...) is considered a category of literature by authors who write from a perspective refracted by at least two cultures, national identities, or languages” [60, p. 1]. Stanišić acknowledges that this type of literature is represented by a great variety of migrant writers who come from and write in different cultural, social, and political contexts. He also notes that it is impossible to create a single category of “world migrant literature” because those varying experiences unavoidably will define certain topics, styles, and genres of authors’ writings unique to every country. Rösch [53], however, argues that migration-focused literature can be considered the new “world literature.” What he defines a “Migrationsliteratur” can no longer be limited to narrow national criteria; this type of writing enables literatures’ participation in global processes.

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<sup>13</sup> Walkowitz also views this kind of literature as including “all works produced in a time of migration or that can be said to reflect on migration” [63, p. 533]. Similarly, the author considers the global book printing industry and the “migration of books” as a contributing factor to discussions about the literature of migration: “Immigrant fiction suggests that literary studies will have to examine the global writing of

Indeed, “Migrationsliteratur” transforms the topic of migration into an intercultural narrative, in which different ethnic groups, cultures, and languages are constantly interacting with each other [63, p. 107]. Similarly, Walkowitz [63] asserts that the “political and social processes of immigration shape the whole literary system, the relationships among all of the works in a literary culture, and not simply the part of that system that involves books generated by immigrant populations” (p. 533).<sup>13</sup> To describe this all-encompassing global approach, Walkowitz adopts Adelson’s term “literature of migration” (Adelson [26] cited in [63], p. 533). Walkowitz also views this kind of literature as including “all works produced in a time of migration or that can be said to reflect on migration” [63, p. 533]. Similarly, the author considers the global book printing industry and the “migration of books” as a contributing factor to discussions about the literature of migration: “Immigrant fiction suggests that literary studies will have to examine the global writing of books, in addition to their classification, design, publication, translation, anthologizing, and reception across multiple geographies. Books are no longer imagined to exist in a single literary system but may exist, now and in the future, in several literary systems, through various and uneven practices of world circulation” [63, 2006, p. 528].

In her exploration of the “Turkish turn” in German literature, Adelson [26], elaborates that “[t]he development of postnational structures in the age of globalization does not displace national frames of reference in any simple way, and those national frameworks that endure are historical formations, themselves subject to defamiliarizing change at the turn to the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (p. 8). Therefore, Adelson acknowledges the importance of the national component, while underlining its inevitable change in the age of globalization. Moreover, Adelson contends that “the literature of migration is no longer situated in any predictable sense ‘between two worlds’” [26, p. 5]. In fact, she positions “literature of migration” “in contradistinction” to Chiellino’s [32] earlier discussed “intercultural literature” [26, p.23].

“Migrationsliteratur” resembles Adelson’s “literature of migration” in that it opines on global

books, in addition to their classification, design, publication, translation, anthologizing, and reception across multiple geographies. Books are no longer imagined to exist in a single literary system but may exist, now and in the future, in several literary systems, through various and uneven practices of world circulation” [63, p. 528].

processes in a number of ways. Yet Adelson's [26] definition of the concept is more fruitful for the field of literary analysis as it considers contemporary literature from a historical perspective: "Conceptualizing the field as a literature of migration allows us to keep transnational migration and its long-range cultural effects keenly in sight as historical formations, without limiting these effects to the initial influx of guest workers" (p. 23). Ideas about "literature of migration" are evolving at precisely the moment when categories of diaspora and national memory are no longer sufficient to address the changing relationships between diaspora communities and national states [26, p. 27]. In my research, I adopt Adelson's [26] interpretation of "literary structures partly in terms of their transfigurative historic significance" (p. 26) and believe that "literature of migration" is an evolving trend on both national and global scales. Therefore, as a concept, "literature of migration" signifies a new historical stage in the development of writing about migration. Now more than ever, it is important to stop talking exclusively about immigrants or emigrants and their autobiographies as the main contributors to the literary corpus on migration (as the terms "Migrationsgeschichte," "Migrantenliteratur," "migrants' literature," and "emigration literature" imply). Migration has become a global fixture, influencing those who actually migrate and those who more passively observe it. Migration has opened up a number of related discussions that appear to be mostly limited to travel and trauma ("Migrant literature," "Migrationsliteratur"). Literature of migration raises and embraces issues of hybridity, ethnicity, multilingualism, and inclusion into and exclusion from both host and home societies ("interkulturelle/interlinguale Literatur" and "diasporic literature"). All of these concepts, "diaspora (diasporic) literature," "migrant literature," "emigration literature," "intercultural and interlingual literature," represent particular national contexts (German, Irish, Italian). The concept "literature of migration," however, has the potential to embrace both the national and the international, making it possible to talk about a global literature of migration.

### 3. "LITERATURE OF MIGRATION" IN THE UKRAINIAN CONTEXT

In the Ukrainian context, the notion of "emigrants' literature" refers primarily to "diaspora literature" [44, p. 330]. Scholarly attention has focused on the literary, social, and political work of four main groups of Ukrainian writers who for various reasons emigrated in the twentieth century: The "Prague School" (1920s), the MUR (*Mystets'kyi Ukrains'kyi Rukh*)<sup>14</sup> (1945), "the New York Group" (mid-1950s), and "*Slovo*"<sup>15</sup> (1957). These four organizations were and continue to be studied by Pohrebennyk [51], [52], Il'nyts'kyi [40], Bahan [28], Skoryna [57], Kovaliv [44], Sherekh [54], and many others.

Interestingly, Zhyravs'ka [65] points to the inaccuracy of the term "diaspora" when defining literature by Ukrainian authors living abroad. This reflects the field's broader tendency to revisit and potentially revise meanings of existing terminology and its potential to reflect cogently on new features and trends. She emphasizes the need for further scholarly discussion aimed at developing more accurate terminology, and common criteria and approaches to the study of this type of literature. For example, in the Ukrainian context, scholars use at least four terms when discussing the literature of migration: "emigrant writers," "diaspora writers," "foreign Ukrainian writers," and "Ukrainian writers in exile." Similar to previous classification schemas, these concepts are constructed around the writers' biographies. It should also be noted that this terminology was created in reference to twentieth century migration processes that may not be immediately relevant today. In the early 2000s, Ukraine witnessed either its fourth or fifth wave of migration (see footnote 1), which has since been reflected in contemporary literature.

To my knowledge, only a handful of studies explore the literary interpretation of contemporary Ukrainian migration processes. Skurtul [58], for example, offers a new classification of what she calls the "literature of *emigration* discourse" (italics is mine). She develops three main categories: "1) literature of emigration (literature of diaspora), 2) literature about emigration (a larger literary corpus which includes both mainland Ukrainian writings and temporary emigrants—those produced by labour, academic, political and other types of emigration),

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<sup>14</sup> The Ukrainian Art Movement

<sup>15</sup> Word

3) literature of emigrant rhizome”<sup>16</sup> [58, p. 197]. In her categorization of contemporary writing, which I would define as a migration discourse, Skurtul deploys previous understandings of the term “emigration.” This is inherently problematic as it limits her three categories to the Ukrainian mainland’s understanding of “emigrant writers” and their “emigrant experiences.” Her use of previously conceptualized vocabulary also limits her interpretive horizons when discussing “internal emigration,” and the postmodern concept of an “emigrant rhizome.” Ultimately, her classification schema borrows from continental literary contexts and debates and is similarly too narrow to embrace the variety of contemporary writing on the topic. Additionally, Skurtul [59] does not consider the dominant role of the emigrant in “modern Ukrainian woman’s prose.” Instead, she attempts to identify the common themes raised by women writers in what she defines as “literary works that reflect the everyday work of Ukrainians abroad”<sup>17</sup> [59, p. 256]. No further definition of the works selected for discussion was provided, which understandably, was not the focus of her study. At the same time, Skurtul’s perspectives on those literary works written by Ukrainian women writers on the topic of emigration would be extremely valuable given her expressed interest in and existing work on the “literature of emigration discourse.”

Khanenko-Friesen [43] explores Ukrainian fiction on the topic of *zarobichanstvo* (labour migration), focusing on the literature that appeared in the context of Ukrainian labour immigration to Italy (p. 489). She compiles an impressive annotated bibliography of publications, both prose and poetry, wherein the topic of labour migration is either central to the plot or constitutes an important component of the storyline. In 2012, the bibliography included 82 publications by first-time and established writers with and without labour migration experience. The researcher observes that most of the identified publications are authored by women and half of them are published in L’viv, Ternopil’, and Ivano-Frankivs’k regions of Ukraine [43, p. 492]. She also notes that authors of the identified publications write predominantly in Ukrainian; however, several texts are written in Russian and Italian. The researcher highlights the unfolding, evolving nature of the literature on the topic of labour migration, which, over the course of ten

years, between 2003 and 2013, emerged from the popular regional discourses and immigrant folklore into a separate and rather mature literary field of its own [43]. When trying to define these publications, Khanenko-Friesen [43] opines that both terms “fiction on the topic of labour migration” and “labour migration literature” are too narrow to embrace the variety of discovered genres, styles, and themes (p. 491). Instead, she proposes the term “literature of post socialist folklore realism” and describes this type of literature as a transnational phenomenon [43, p. 500]. I find Khanenko-Friesen’s [43] term appropriate and applicable to the 82 publications she included into the bibliography; however, while the term references the identified origin of this kind of literature and a specific time period (alluding to the late 1990s), it may not be applicable to future texts that explore the topic of women’s emigration from Ukraine in other decades, under different social and economic circumstances.

In order to explore the Ukrainian literature of migration discourse, it is necessary to examine general and Ukraine-specific migration trends. As previously noted, the feminization of migration is not contained to Ukraine. Globally, more women have been leaving their home country in search of a better life. Ukrainian women often emigrate under the guise of work, education, spousal dependency, or foreign marriage. These aspects of the contemporary wave of Ukrainian emigration are reflected in novels by Sniadanko [19], [20], Semenkovich [18], Halych [6], Berezovs’kyi [1], Stepovychka [22], Rozdobud’ko [16], and others. Although the majority of writers exploring Ukrainian women’s experiences of migration currently reside and work in Ukraine (several of them had previous migration experience), two authors in particular—Lewycka [9], [10] and Sorina [21]—do not easily fit into the category of *emigration* literature. Lewycka is a British writer of Ukrainian origin who lives and works in England and thus cannot be described as an emigrant per se. In her novels *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian*, and *Two Caravans*, she describes the lives of Ukrainian immigrants in England, their problems adapting to a new environment, and the ways in which they negotiate their identities, to name a few. In this respect, migration is examined through a dual perspective of two cultures, two countries, and two languages bridged by the author herself. If we consider these to

<sup>16</sup> According to Skurtul [58], “literature of emigrant rhizome” refers to texts with a motif of internal emigration, but whose plots do not represent everyday lives of emigrants; instead, they “implant emigrant rhizome” into their structure (p. 196).

<sup>17</sup> ...творах, що відображають трудові будні українців за кордоном.



be works of English literature, as the author lives in England and writes in English, then Stanišić's literature of migration discourse would be analytically appropriate. However, these novels also focus on Ukrainian immigrants. Sorina, who currently lives in Italy and attended university there, published her novel *Voglio un marito Italiano*<sup>18</sup> in 2006. While one may view Sorina as representative of a recent wave of emigration, her novel, written and published in Italy, still shares several common topics and themes with writers in Ukraine. However, it should be noted that Sorina's novel has yet to be translated into Ukrainian, thus making it more difficult to categorize.<sup>19</sup> As such, though the works of Lewycka and Sorina are still largely unknown to the vast majority of Ukrainians, they clearly belong to the new tradition of the literature of migration because of their themes, topics, languages, and the status of their writer. Moreover, I suggest we use the term "literature of migration" in order to avoid any confusion with previous Ukrainian writings on emigration.

Considering the increase in the number of literary publications about the emigration of Ukrainian women during the first decade of the 2000s, what is defined as literature of migration may also be characterized as both popular and feminine. This literature appears to be popular in Western Ukraine, where the emigration rate in the analysed period of the early 2000s was higher than in other regions.<sup>20</sup> Here, emigration of women is commonly discussed in media, literature, and the theatre. It should be also noted that in the Ukrainian context, the literature of migration is commonly understood as "popular literature" [56] and only reflects one side of labor migration from Ukraine in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in pop culture. According to Shostak: "[t]he numerous reflections on labor migration in literature, theatre, film and the media constitute a new public discursive space in Ukraine where *zarobitchanstvo* is being constructed as a modern large-scale social drama of Ukrainian society unfolding in the imagined and lived shifting dualities of Europe's here and there" [56, p. 2].

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<sup>18</sup> "I want to marry an Italian"

<sup>19</sup> The information was confirmed during the research stage of the project and may be subject to (future) change.

<sup>20</sup> According to Jaroszewicz [41], [b]efore 2014 approximately 70% of Ukrainian labour migrants came from the western part of the country, in which

When defining the literature of migration as a distinct literary trend, focus is usually placed on main characters and common topics—Ukrainian women emigrants and emigration of women from Ukraine. Genre, authors' emigration status, their ethnicity, and the language of writing are acknowledged; however, none of these factors bear more importance or are more central to the final definition. The term "literature of migration" arguably allows for a broader, more inclusive approach when studying contemporary writings on emigration in general and the emigration of women in particular. Along with a focus on women and gendered perspectives on migration, the topic of women's emigration from Ukraine in the late 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s raised by literary works, and the fact that these are written in a variety of languages, demonstrate how the concept "literature of migration" allows the combination of the two: immigrant and emigrant perspective on writing.

#### 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

After reviewing varying approaches to the definition of literature written about emigration and/or by migrants, I determined three main foci in the scholarly discourse that pivot on authors' origins and biographies, migration being the focus of literary works, and language of writing. My overview also revealed that literary explorations of migration often represent the perspective of the receiving national state and therefore oppose this writing to the national literature of the receiving country (Duffy [36], Merolla & Ponzanesi [48], Curti [33], Stanišić [60]). A competing approach to the imbrication of literature and migration discusses migration as a global trend and in the context of world literature (Rösch [53], Walkowitz [63], Adelson [26]).

Most of the discussed terms and concepts, such as immigration literature, emigration (diaspora) literature, intercultural literature and others, could not be applied to the identified literary corpus about emigration from Ukraine because they did not represent the perspective of the sending country. Moreover, such terminology did not account for non-migrant writers exploring the topic of migration.

migration had become a widespread method of coping with poverty and low salaries" (p. 2). Additionally, the 2011 IOM Report on migration in Ukraine highlights higher geographical distribution of Ukrainian labour migrants in western regions of the country, quoting "economic disparities and asymmetric development paths between the regions (p. 4).

Hence, I proposed that Adelson's [26], [27] term "literature of migration" best defines the new type of writing on the migration discourse in Ukraine. The term "literature of migration" allowed me to differentiate the recent literary trend from the Ukrainian "emigrants' literature" of the twentieth century and to reflect on several distinctive features of the identified texts. For instance, contemporary writing on emigration from Ukraine is described as popular literature largely associated with *zarobitchanstvo*; it is predominantly authored by both women with and without emigration experience; this literary corpus focuses on women emigrants and their migratory experiences; several of the identified literary works are written in languages other than Ukrainian. In fact, literature of migration freely employs a number of European languages. Entire novels are either written in languages other than Ukrainian or contain multiple foreign words and phrases, which can be used as additional, often highly productive evaluative literary devices. The topic of emigration was determined to be the main criterion in identifying literary texts as literature of migration. Thus, the literature of migration in the Ukrainian context describes a sizeable literary corpus, which is fundamentally different from the corpus of emigration (diaspora) literature. While the present research investigated only literary fiction, the Ukrainian literature of migration spans a variety of genres and includes immigrant folklore, poetry, plays, and screen plays.

To conclude, the literature of migration in the Ukrainian context represents a new trend in writing within migration discourses that reflects migration tendencies characteristic of the country in the specified time period as well as global developments. The "feminization" of this type of writing (due to the number of women writers who touch on the topic and the evolution of a new woman archetype in Ukrainian literature) is a defining feature that separates it from the corpus of emigration (diaspora) literature. It should be noted that further research is needed to develop a detailed shared terminology that can be used by scholars when discussing Ukrainian literature about migration. The term "literature of migration" is only one possible suggestion that needs further interrogation and translation into Ukrainian. More comparative contemporary literary studies from a variety of contexts are needed to test the ability of the term "literature of migration" to represent a global trend.

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