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Edited by Julie Fedor

## Migration, Language, and Identity: New Agendas for Ukrainian Studies in the Asia-Pacific Region. Part I

Guest editors: Yoko Aoshima, Iryna Skubii




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# SOVIET AND POST-SOVIET POLITICS AND SOCIETY

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# Migration, Language, and Identity: New Agendas for Ukrainian Studies in the Asia-Pacific Region

# Part I

**JSPPS 12:1 (2026)**

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# CONTENTS

GUEST EDITORS: YOKO AOSHIMA AND IRYNA SKUBII

Migration, Language, and Identity: New Agendas for Ukrainian Studies in the Asia-Pacific Region
JULIE FEDOR, IRYNA SKUBII, AND YOKO AOSHIMA ..... 1

Beyond Wilsonianism: Diasporic Self-Determination, Japanese Geopolitics, and the Ukrainian Far East in 1918
OLGA KHOMENKO ..... 23

Activism in Exile: Baltic Grassroots Diplomacy in Australia, 1985-1990
JESSE SEEBERG-GORDON ..... 73

Oral History of the Ukrainian Community in Australia Through the Memory of the Descendants
IRYNA SKUBII, OLHA SHMIHELSKA-KOZULIAK, MARKO PAVLYSHYN, AND YANA OSTAPENKO ..... 101

Preserving the Standard: The Kharkiv Orthography in the Ukrainian Diaspora
IHOR DATSENKO ..... 137

Russian Journalistic Criticism of Ukrainian History and Literature in the Early 1840s: The Case of Shevchenko's Milieu
MASAYUKI UEMURA ..... 183

ABOUT THE GUEST EDITORS ..... 205

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS ..... 206

# Migration, Language, and Identity: New Agendas for Ukrainian Studies in the Asia-Pacific Region

Julie Fedor, Iryna Skubii, and Yoko Aoshima

Russia's invasion of Ukraine trigged seismic shifts in the fields of post-Soviet area studies and Slavic Studies, not only in Europe and North America, but also across the Asia-Pacific region.[1] Like our counterparts elsewhere, scholars in this region have been prompted to reflect on our responsibilities as scholars, educators and citizens in the new global environment, and in particular, to rethink how we approach Ukraine's place in the region and globally. This special issue presents new scholarship in Ukrainian studies and East European studies in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in Japan and Australia, two countries with distinguished traditions in Soviet area studies and Slavic Studies, which are both in the process of confronting and addressing the Russocentrism that has characterized and shaped academic institutions, scholarship, and teaching in the field.[2] The special issue brings together scholars from two key institutions, the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center at Hokkaido University, and the University of Melbourne, both of which are emerging as new regional hubs for research, teaching and community outreach in Ukrainian Studies, through

[1] For a list of new Ukrainian Studies initiatives launched around the globe in response to Russia's invasions of Ukraine in 2014 and 2022, see Appendix below.

[2] On the Japanese tradition, see: Motoki Nomachi, Daisuke Adachi, and Sawako Ogawa, "Recent Trends and Advancements in *Slavic Studies in Japan," Slavic and East European Journal* 64, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 2–12. On the history of Soviet studies at the University of Melbourne, see Julie Fedor, "Russian History Returns to Melbourne," *SHAPS Forum*, 11 June 2019, https://blogs.unimelb.edu.au/shaps-research/2019/06/11/russian-history-returns-to-melbourne/.

the former's Research Unit for Ukraine and the Neighboring Areas, and the latter's Research Initiative on Post-Soviet Space (RIPSS).[3]

The special issue arose out of a joint workshop held at the University of Melbourne in December 2025, *War, Migration, and Identity: Exploring New Agendas for Ukrainian Studies in the Asia-Pacific Region*, which was funded under the Hokkaido-Melbourne Joint Research Workshops scheme.[4] The interdisciplinary workshop brought together historians, linguists, archivists, literary, cultural and media studies scholars, across a wide range of backgrounds and career stages. Foremost in our minds were the ongoing news from the frontlines in Ukraine, as villages and cities come under continued shelling, and the situation of refugees from Ukraine, many of whom continue to live in limbo, their international status precarious.

The Australian setting offers a distinctive but relatively understudied perspective on the topics of war, migration, and identity, and a fitting meeting place for a critical conversation about the continuing reverberations of migration history. As Joy Damousi notes, "Australian history is dominated by stories of populations who have fled or migrated from war zones".[5] After

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3 The University of Melbourne hosts the only position directly dedicated to Ukrainian studies across Australia and New Zealand, the Mykola Zerov Fellowship in Ukrainian Studies, which was established in 2024 with the support of the Association of Ukrainians in Victoria (https://auv.org.au), and its Ukrainian Studies Support Fund. The Ukrainian Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand (https://www.ukrainianstudies.asn.au/) brings together scholars engaged in Ukrainian studies across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

4 The Hokkaido-Melbourne partnership was launched in 2023 under the leadership of Prof. Akihiro Iwashita and Prof. Mark Edele. Organization of the 2025 workshop was led by Prof. Yoko Aoshima and the inaugural Mykola Zerov Fellow in Ukrainian Studies, Dr Iryna Skubii, with support from Assoc. Prof. Julie Fedor and Prof. Motoki Nomachi.

5 Joy Damousi, *Memory and Migration in the Shadow of War: Australia's Greek Immigrants after World War II and the Greek Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 12.

World War II, Australia became the second most popular destination (after North America) for Displaced Persons from Europe.[6] Between 1947 and 1961, around 248 thousand migrants came to Australia from Eastern Europe, representing one fifth of the net migration to Australia during this period.[7] These included approximately 21 thousand Ukrainians, who found refuge here between 1947 and 1954,[8] as well as 60 thousand Poles, 24 thousand Yugoslavs, 19 thousand Latvians, 10 thousand Lithuanians, 10 thousand Czechs and 9 thousand Estonians, among others.[9] This migration scheme was a watershed in Australian social history, representing the country's first experiment in accepting non-British migrants on a mass scale, though with the explicit aim of maintaining racial homogeneity by targeting those of "pure European descent".[10] Yet the history of those strands of this post-war

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6 Diana Kay and Robert Miles, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?: European Volunteer Workers in Britain, 1946–1951* (Routledge, 1992).

7 Anna Haebich, *Spinning the Dream: Assimilation in Australia 1950–1970* (Fremantle Press, 2008). One third of net migration during this period came from Britain and Ireland; one quarter from Southern Europe; and one fifth from Northern Europe (Germany, the Netherlands).

8 Vasyl Markus (ed.), E*ncyclopedia of Ukrainian Diaspora, volume 4: Australia-Asia-Africa* (Kyiv, New York, Chicago, Melbourne, 1995), 86.

9 Luda Popenhagen, *Australian Lithuanians* (University of New South Wales Press, 2012), 44; Eric Richards, *Destination Australia: Migration to Australia since 1901* (2008), 185.

10 As James Jupp points out, "[t]he Displaced Persons intake laid the foundations for a multicultural Australia, even while official policy favoured rapid assimilation"; James Jupp, *From White Australia to Woomera: The Story of Australian Immigration*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 13. Eric Richards notes that "For Australia, a profoundly monocultural country, the new waves of European immigrants were the onset of a social revolution the quietness and peaceability of which surprised even its instigators"; Eric Richards, *Destination Australia: Migration to Australia since 1901* (UNSW Press, 2008), 199. The DP migration program led to the institution of Australia's first state-funded English language classes for migrants, established in 1947; Michael Clyne and James Jupp, *Multiculturalism and Integration: A Harmonious Relationship* (ANU Press, 2011), xv. One representative of this wave of migration, Polish sociologist Jerzy (George) Zubrzycki, would become an important architect of Australian multiculturalism; Clyne and Jupp, *Multiculturalism and Integration*, xx. (And in Canada, we might note, Ukrainians played an important role in advocating for and designing multiculturalism). Ruth Balint and Zora Simic have criticized the tendency to construct the

migration that originated from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is a relatively neglected topic. To a certain degree this reflects the Australian monocultural bent, such that, as Jayne Persian has observed, the DPs coming to Australia "soon found that telling their stories was not encouraged in an Australian society intent on assimilation".[11] Despite being discouraged from developing their distinct cultural identities, Eastern Europeans were very active politically and established a number of different organizations and networks, which were predominantly anti-communist. Among many such activities and networks was the human rights activism against the persecution of Ukrainian dissidents in the Soviet Union, which went beyond the Ukrainian community, including reaching out for support from other Eastern Europeans and Australian politicians.[12] The late Australian

post-war DP migration to Australia as a "foundational moment in the dismantling of White Australia, and the creation of a new and progressive multicultural nation"; see Ruth Balint and Zora Simic, "Histories of Migrants and Refugees in Australia", *Australian Historical Studies* 49, no. 3 (2018). On the ways in which Australian migration policies and social responses to these were shaped by the Cold War ideological setting, see Robert Manne, "The Road to Tampa", in Laksiri Jayasuriya et al. (eds), *Legacies of White Australia: Race, Culture, and Nation* (UWA Press, 2003), 167.

11 Jayne Persian, "Displaced Persons (1947–52) in Australia: Memory in Autobiography", in Paul Longley (ed.), *Migrant Nation: Australian Culture, Society and Identity* (Anthem Press, 2018), 151. Later, especially with the adoption of multiculturalism, this would change; see Persian, "Displaced Persons", 151, 155. See also in the same volume, Katarzyna Kwapisz Williams, "Between Utopia and Autobiography: Migrant Narratives in Australia". The history of post-war East European migration to Britain is a similarly neglected topic; see Linda McDowell,
"Old and New European Economic Migrants: Whiteness and Managed Migration Policies", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35, no. 1 (2009): 20-21.

12 In Cold War Australia, the Ukrainian, Baltic, and Polish communities, for example, were generally considered anti-communist. In 1967, the Committee for the Defense of the National and Human Rights in Ukraine was founded by the Association of Ukrainians in Victoria in Melbourne. For more details on the wide range of its activities in support of Ukrainian dissidents in Australia and internationally, see the forthcoming article, Iryna Skubii, Marko Pavlyshyn, Yana Ostapenko, *et al.* "When the Distance Does Not Matter: Ukrainian Community in Australia and Defence of Human Rights in Ukraine", forthcoming in the second volume of this special issue, in *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 13, no. 1 (2027). The Australian left would sometimes complain that East European migrants

scholar Sneja Gunew (herself the daughter of a German mother and Bulgarian father who were part of this postwar migration) observed in 2017 that "[i]t continues to be an uphill battle to find these other histories [the histories of Southern and East European migrants] represented and acknowledged as an intrinsic part of Australian culture".[13] In later decades, scholarship on the history of postwar Australian migration often focused on Italian migration in particular, while the migrants from the Soviet Union and

were granted more political freedom compared to, for example, Greek migrants; see for example John Playford, *The Truth behind "Captive Nations Week" and the Extremist Emigres—ABN (Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations) in Australia* (Outlook, April 1968), 15. Allen C. Lynch argues that the anti-Soviet views of the Soviet diaspora were a significant disadvantage hampering the Soviet Union compared to China, with China enjoying "a capital-rich and patriotic Chinese diaspora willing and able to invest in a very low-cost labor environment within China), whereas "[b]y contrast, the Soviet diaspora worked almost entirely against the country's integration in the West"; Allen C. Lynch, "Political Economies of Reform and Reaction. The Russian and Chinese Cases Compared, 1965–2010", in Tse-kang Leng (ed.), *Chinese Models of Development: Global, Local, and Comparative Perspectives* (Bloomsbury, 2014). Lynch argues that the activities of East European lobby groups are part of the reason why the USSR never attained "MFN or normal trading status with the United States as China did in 1979. As late as 2011, such status eluded the Russians, as no U.S. president wished to risk the political capital needed to advance an allegedly pro-Russian policy in the American body politic."

13 Sneja Gunew, *Post-Multicultural Writers as Neo-cosmopolitan Mediators* (Anthem Press, 2017), 25. Gunew also argues that "[t]oo often in post-colonial critiques, European immigrant groups are homogenized and made synonymous with a naturalized 'whiteness' or with various imperialisms. But at the same time, particular nations or groups within Europe had very different histories relating to colonialism and imperialism"; Gunew, *Post-Multicultural Writers*, 26. Gunew writes elsewhere about how a lack of knowledge about Ukraine helped to make possible the Demidenko literary hoax; see Sneja Gunew, *Haunted Nations: The Colonial Dimensions of Multiculturalism* (Routledge, 2004). Gunew argues here that "[o]ne solution is not to suppress 'ethnic' histories or to ghettoize them as the foreign or the parasitic but to encourage more informed discussion, to proliferate the information concerning a more comprehensive history of migration".

Eastern Europe were largely ignored.[14] Similar tendencies toward exclusion can also be seen in wider public spaces.

East European migrant communities have also tended to be overlooked in efforts to decolonize history, in both Australia and the UK. As Oksana Dudko and Anna Hájková recently pointed out,

> History in the UK has been urgently called upon to be more inclusive, often driven by migrant and postcolonial demands, which in practice often means writing a history through the migrant perspective. However, Eastern Europe is conspicuously missing, left out of the calls for inclusiveness and ignored when re-examining the colonial impulses that persist in some areas of our discipline.[15]

Recently, however, historians have begun to turn their attention to this diverse and hitherto understudied category of migrants to Australia, addressed in a number of books published over the past decade.[16] This historiography is being produced in a context of a new focus on the ongoing history of settler colonialism and the violent displacement and dispossession of Indigenous populations in Australia. As Sneja Gunew noted about Australia and Canada, both countries are "grappling with their histories of co-

---

[14] As Ruth Balint and Zora Simic note, "[u]ndeniably … it is Italian migration that has dominated scholarship on European migrants in the White Australia period"; Ruth Balint and Zora Simic, "Histories of Migrants and Refugees in Australia", *Australian Historical Studies* 49, no. 3 (2018): 15.

[15] Oksana Dudko and Anna Hájková, "Teaching Eastern Europe in the Age of Russia's Imperial Invasions: A Conversation on Being Postcolonial When No One Takes Any Notice", *History Workshop Journal* 99 (Spring 2025): 152. Dudko and Hájková note that this neglect is occurring in a situation when Polish and Romanian are now the most frequently spoken languages in the UK after English.

[16] See for example Ruth Balint, *Destination Elsewhere: Displaced Persons and their Quest to Leave Postwar Europe* (Cornell University Press, 2021); Phillip Deery and Sheila Fitzpatrick (eds), *Russians in Cold War Australia* (Lexington Books, 2024); Mark Edele and Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Displaced Persons from the Soviet Union to Australia in the Wake of the Second World War", *History Australia* 12, no. 2 (2015): 7–16; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Lost Souls: Soviet Displaced Persons and the Birth of the Cold War* (Princeton University Press, 2024); Jayne Persian, *Beautiful Balts: From Displaced Persons to New Australians* (NewSouth, 2017).

lonial invasion", while at the same time dealing with "their recognition that they are shaped by many waves of discrepant migrations".[17] Thus, many of the new contributions to this historiography focus on examining encounters between postwar European migrants and Indigenous Australians and how these both shaped European migrants' sense of their place in the settler colony and were implicated in the settlement project.[18]

Other scholars have sought to revisit East European migration to Australia through a post-colonial lens. Kasia Kwapisz Williams sets out to highlight experiences of Stalinist colonial violence as a tool for bringing the histories of individual migrant communities to broader public awareness in Australia. She notes that Australia is "home to many survivors of the Stalinist regime and their descendants"; many of the DPs resettled in Australia had spent time "in gulags in Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Turkestan … Yet… the 'Soviet story' is largely missing from public narratives and understanding of World War II and its aftermath in Australia."[19] Investigating the case of the "Sybiraks" (the Polish term for those deported to Siberia), whose stories have to date remained "largely internal to the [Polish] community," Kasia Williams asks broader questions about the place of marginalized migrant groups from Eastern Europe and the USSR in the Australian memoryscape: "How can we make spaces in modern Australia for the stories earlier considered unfitting? Can the recognition of the affinity between colonized nations and shared experiences of struggle with an empire, assist in making such space?"[20]

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17 Sneja Gunew, *Post-Multicultural Writers as Neo-cosmopolitan Mediators* (Anthem Press, 2017), 2.

18 Jayne Persian and Karen Agutter, "European Post-War Migrants and Indigenous Australians: A History in Fragments", *History Australia* 18, no. 1 (2021): 112–29; Anna Haebich, *Spinning the Dream: Assimilation in Australia 1950–1970* (Fremantle Press, 2008); Andonis Piperoglou and Francesco Ricatti (eds), *Researching Migration on Indigenous Lands: Challenges, Reflections, Pathways* (Springer, 2026).

19 Kasia Kwapisz Williams, "Siberia and the 'Soviet Story' in the Australian Imagination", abstract for talk presented to the RIPSS Seminar Series, 20 September 2024.

20 Kasia Kwapisz Williams, "Siberia and the 'Soviet Story'".

Hence, while the migrant stories of Eastern European communities were underrepresented in public and academic spaces, memory played a role as an instrument for preserving family and community histories of displacement and migration. In his important 2025 book, *Victimhood Nationalism: History and Memory in a Global Age*, Jie-Hyun Lim identifies two key turning points in the globalization of memory: the post-World War II mass migrations out of Europe, on the one hand, and the end of the Cold War, on the other. Jie-Hyun Lim writes,

> When the war refugees were massively evacuated, expelled, resettled, and displaced across borders after 1945, their memories traveled with their luggage. Diverse memories of migrants inadvertently encountered and interacted with one another in a transcultural migratory context…
>
> As forced migrants, the displaced, fugitives, refugees, exiles, and immigrants relocated and resettled in alien lands on an unprecedently large scale after the war, their memories of the Holocaust, colonial genocide, Stalinism, and other atrocities migrated along with them… Those entangled memories had never crossed paths … before… As people began to reflect on their own past through what happened on the other side of the planet, they became aware of how tightly the world was interwoven…[21]

Jie-Hyun Lim goes on to show how, after the communist collapse, memory was "freed from the Cold War constraints":

> When the Cold War ended, the globalization of memory picked up speed…. the Holocaust became a reminder of the transatlantic slave trade and colonial genocide, and the memory of colonial violence reciprocally evoked the Holocaust and other genocides…
>
> The globalization of memory … also allowed memory studies to break away from Eurocentrism.[22]

Oksana Dudko writes eloquently about the need for "embracing Ukrainian studies not as a nation-building enterprise, but as a compelling analytical entry point for studying large-scale processes of modern politics, trans-imperial nation-making, and

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[21] Jie-Hyun Lim, *Victimhood Nationalism: History and Memory in a Global Age*, trans. Megan Sungyoon (Columbia University Press, 2025), 5, 7.

[22] Jie-Hyun Lim, *Victimhood Nationalism*, 5, 7.

cross-border exchanges of ideas, ideologies, and knowledge."[23] We engage with this approach here in our use of Ukraine as a case study providing a lens for the broader study of East European migration.

One of our aims, in turning attention to the history and memory of migration to Australia from Ukraine and elsewhere in Eastern Europe is to investigate the interplay between migration, memory, and identity, taking a cue from Julia Creet's introduction to the 2020 edited volume, *Memory and Migration*, in which she asks,

> How do we understand memory that has migrated or has been exiled from its local habitations? … Should we not, given our mobility, begin to ask different questions of memory, ones that do not attend only to the content of memory, but to the travels that have invoked it? …
>
> Between times, places, generations, and media, from individuals to communities and vice versa, movement is what produces memory—and our anxieties about pinning it to place.[24]

Questions of memory and migration are especially acute and complex when it comes to the case of the Ukrainian diaspora. As Sneja Gunew writes, "The trajectory for many migrants excludes return when their countries/languages of origin no longer exist, and so involves manufacturing serial homes—always provisional."[25] Natalia Khanenko-Friesen has discussed how, during the Cold War, the Ukrainian Canadian relationship to the homeland was shaped by the history of Soviet attempts to control communications and relations between Soviet Ukraine and the rest of the world, resulting in "profound … disconnection" and emotional

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[23] Oksana Dudko, "Gate-Crashing 'European' and 'Slavic' Area Studies: Can Ukrainian Studies Transform the Fields?," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 65, no. 2 (2023): 174–89 (181).

[24] Julia Creet, "Introduction: The Migration of Memory and Memories of Migration", in Julia Creet and Andreas Kitzmann (eds), *Memory and Migration* (University of Toronto Press, 2009), 3, 6, 9.

[25] Sneja Gunew, "'To find our measure, exactly, not the echo of other voices': Antigone Kefala's Ex-centric Australian Modernity," in Elizabeth McMahon and Brigitta Olubas (eds), *Antigone Kefala: New Australian Modernities* (UWA Publishing, 2021), printed page 3.

intensity when it came to how the homeland was imagined, and giving rise to various forms of nostalgia, mythologizing, stereotyping, and othering.[26] Arguably, this applies even more so to the even more geographically remote Australian Ukrainian case. Yet these processes and flows have also moved in reverse, rebounding, and multiple directions. The longest-running Ukrainian-language newspaper was established in New Jersey in 1893, for example;[27] and the Kharkiv bandura tradition was preserved and returned to Ukraine by the Ukrainian diaspora in North America and Australia.[28]

Despite its relatively small numbers, the Australian Ukrainian diaspora played an out-sized role in preserving and promoting Ukrainian culture. In his contribution to this special issue, Ihor Datsenko shows how the Ukrainian diaspora, including in Australia, played an important role in preserving and consolidating linguistic norms in resistance to the Soviet Russification drive. There are other examples, too, where precious cultural objects that were destroyed or altered in the Soviet homeland managed to survive in Australia and North America, such as the rare varieties of Georgian grape arising out of particular diasporic trajectories that enabled the bypassing of Soviet selection processes, and have now recently been re-planted from South Australia to Georgia.[29] The Ukrainian Museum of Australia in Melbourne is another example where the extraordinary collecting practices of

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[26] Natalia Khanenko-Friesen, *Ukrainian Otherlands: Diaspora, Homeland, and Folk Imagination in the Twentieth Century* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), 155–57.

[27] See Michael Moser, *New Contributions to the History of the Ukrainian Language* (Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2016), chapter titled "The 'Mirror from Overseas': The History of Modern Standard Ukrainian as Reflected in the North American Ukrainian Newspaper Svoboda (The Early Years: From 1893 to the 1930s)", in 411–39.

[28] See Mariia Chadiuk, "Poserednyky mizh istorieiu i suchasnistiu," Den' (Kyiv), 30 April (year not stated), https://day.kyiv.ua/article/kultura/posere dnyky-mizh-istoriyeyu-i-suchasnistyu. See also on this topic, Nataliia Kostiuk, "Maistry vyhotovlennia bandur v ukrains'ki diaspori pivnichnoi Ameryky ta Avstralii druha polovyna XX st.," *MTsND*, 13 April 2022.

[29] Lado Uzunashvili presentation on Georgian viticulture and archaeology, *Australia-Georgia Symposium: Archaeology and Beyond*, 23 March 2024, University of Melbourne; see also Lado Uzunashvili, "Saperavi's Great American

Bishop Prasko during his travels to Ukraine during the late Soviet period have resulted in a unique collection of regional embroidery samples, rare books, and other artefacts.[30]

Despite the significant recent developments in critical reassessment of Australian histories of migration, there is a noticeable gap when it comes to understanding the multiplicity of experiences of Eastern European migration to Australia. Despite several successful examples, the major collaborative projects on the archiving of non-English language sources tend not to include much East European coverage.[31] Less numerous groups of migrants such as Ukrainians, who, like so many others in Eastern Europe, experienced complex migration trajectories and shifting state affiliations, continue to remain at the peripheries of the scholarship. By contrast, there is no lack of materials about Russian migrants or Russian-language sources. Hence, while the history of migration is one of the most actively critically developing fields of historical and social science research in Australia, there is still significant work to be done when it comes to decolonizing knowledge about Eastern European migration. Due to the Russocentrism of Soviet studies, the major focus of the scholarship has been devoted to refugees of Russian ethnicity, which has often led to their experience being generalized to apply to all refugees from the Soviet Union.

While numerically much smaller than its Canadian and US counterparts, and despite its relative geographic isolation, the Australian Ukrainian diaspora has, as Orest Subtelny noted in his landmark monumental history of Ukraine, been "one of the best

Journey," *Homeland of Wine Magazine*, n.d., https://nlinemedia.co.uk/saperavis-great-american-journey-2/.

30 See Genevieve Schiesser, "Preserving Precious Ukrainian Heritage in Melbourne," *SHAPS Forum*, 24 May 2024, https://blogs.unimelb.edu.au/shaps-research/2024/05/24/preserving-precious-ukrainian-heritage-in-melbourne/.

31 For example, see the Opening the Multilingual Archive of Australia project, developed by a group of scholars at the University of Sydney; Giorgia Alù *et al.*, *Opening the Multilingual Archive of Australia (OMAA)*, n.d., https://omaa-arts.sydney.edu.au/.

organized and most active in the diaspora".[32] This applies also to the present-day period, when the Australian Ukrainian community has been highly active and effective in lobbying for more support for Ukraine, especially in the state of Victoria.[33] The war has also led to a new wave of migration from Ukraine to Australia; as at January 2024, 11,400 Ukrainians had received humanitarian visas to Australia in the wake of the full-scale invasion.[34] Of course, this is only a drop in the gigantic wave of displacement and movement of refugees caused by the war; by December 2025, according to the UN Refugee Agency, 5.86 million refugees worldwide originated from Ukraine.[35] But the arrival of these new migrants from Ukraine has had a disproportionately large impact. It has been connected to a dramatic revitalization of Australian Ukrainian community life, including a range of initiatives in community museums and archives. One of our aims in hosting our workshop was to explore opportunities for working with the substantial communities arising out of the waves of migration from Ukraine and from other East European countries, sharing best practice for cooperating with local and community organizations, including in the creation of community archives and learning from the history of war, migration, and émigré activism. The workshop included a visit to the Archive of the Association of Ukrainians in Victoria, the only Ukrainian community archive in Australia, where participants took part in the workshop, *Archiving the Ukrainian Community in Practice*.[36]

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32 Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 4th ed. (University of Toronto Press, 2009), 567.

33 See Iuliia Shaipova, "Ukraine–Australia: Closer than Ever," *Ukraïn'ska pryzma*, 9 April 2024, https://prismua.org/english-ukraine-australia-closer-than-ever/.

34 Shaipova, "Ukraine–Australia: Closer than Ever."

35 *Ukraine Situation. UNHCR's 2026 Plans and Financial Requirements* (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2026), 3, https://data.unhrc.org/en/documents/download/120716.

36 "AUV Archive," *Association of Ukrainians in Victoria*, n.d., https://auv.org.au/auv-archive/.

The contributions to this special issue also consider the role played by language in the production and maintenance of identity. As many commentators have noted, ignorance and misconceptions about Ukraine have enabled the war in important ways,[37] and this is arguably especially true when it comes to monolingual Anglophone cultures where, as Timothy Snyder has argued, people may find it hard to grasp Ukrainian bilingual realities and may thus be particularly susceptible to Kremlin propaganda lines equating Russian language and identity.[38] As Peter Pomerantsev puts it,

> [Ukrainian] polyphony has confused Western writers and commentators who want to see things in simple, straight lines. But Ukraine resists straight lines—it's a space that breaks all the old, limited models of identity. Its casual bilingualism makes a mockery of the Herderian idea that language makes a nation.[39]

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[37] See for example Olesya Khromeychuk, "Where is Ukraine?," *Royal Society of Arts Journal*, 13 June 2022, https://www.thersa.org/rsa-journal/where-is-ukraine/; Myroslav Shkandrij, "They Told You So," *Slavic Review*, 28 February 2023, https://aseees.org/letter/they-told-you-so/. In the "Cluster Section 'Origins of the Russo-Ukrainian War'" in *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, three Ukrainian scholars emphasize that the origins of the war in Ukraine lay in a lack of understanding and misconceptions regarding Ukraine—fueled by Russian disinformation and subversion—and in the conciliatory policies towards Russia that were influenced by these. See: Olena Nikolayenko, "Origins of the Russo–Ukrainian War: Russian Imperialism in the Authoritarian Regime," *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 46, no.2 (2025): 125–32; Serhii Plokhy, "Appeasement: The Road to the Russo–Ukrainian War," *ibid*., 133-48; Hiroaki Kuromiya, "The Russo–Ukrainian War and the 'Enigma' of the Donbas," *ibid*., 149–64.

[38] Timothy Snyder, "Ukraine's Easy, Misunderstood Babel," *Politico*, 2 July 2015, https://www.politico.eu/article/crisis-in-ukraine-talk-shows-in-language-war/.

[39] He goes on: "It's a space where Muslims and Jews have traditionally helped each other. Where nationalism can be associated with the most liberal democracy (as well as the more predictable fascism), while multiculturalism can be used to pursue Empire. It's a country where very different stories of the past play out simultaneously, but where the question of what Europe means is now contested most fiercely and existentially. It is, in this sense, at the avant-garde of the present. While other, supposedly more developed countries have nervous breakdowns about how to balance their identity with the fluctuations and instabilities of globalization, Ukraine has been negotiating the paradoxes of being a non-linear nation for much longer"; Peter Pomerantsev, "Preface," in

Rory Finnin and Ivan Kozachenko point out that the Kremlin has sought to obfuscate the reasons for its actions in Ukraine "with the help of one very red herring: Ukraine's distinctive linguistic diversity, its multilingualism".[40] The production and dissemination of reliable and accurate knowledge on language in Ukraine thus becomes a topic of urgent real-world importance.

Natalia Khanenko-Friesen has coined the term "scholarly diplomacy" to capture how Ukrainian studies abroad has been redefined in the wake of the full-scale invasion.[41] We endorse this call for engaged public-facing scholarship that calls out the imperialist discourses and structures that have shaped knowledge and lack of knowledge about Ukraine.[42] This includes the imperative to challenge the notion that Ukrainian studies are inherently parochial and represent a less than fully scholarly endeavor, an attitude that, as Sneja Gunew notes, "is always associated with groups marginalised by dominant cultures, languages, etc. There is the idea that this work belongs to and is only relevant to 'the community', whoever they are."[43] Olga Andriewsky has argued that,

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Volodymyr Yermolenko (ed.), *Ukraine in Histories and Stories: Essays by Ukrainian Intellectuals* (ibidem Verlag, 2025), 11–12.

40 Rory Finnin and Ivan Kozachenko, "Introduction: Ukraine's Multilingualism," *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 6, no. 1 (2020): 3. See also Anna Colin Lebedev's argument that "[t]the criterion of language is often used to explain secessionism in the Donbass, but its role much more subtle and complex: Ukraine is a bilingual country, rather than a juxtaposition of two monolingual halves"; Anna Colin Lebedev, "Ukrainians at a Turning Point in European History," *Études*, 3 March 2015, v–vi.

41 Khanenko-Friesen defines scholarly diplomacy as the "cross-border mobilization of knowledge about Ukraine," including across "both real and conceptual borders"; see 2025 interview available at: https://ukrdiaspora.nauka.gov.ua/en/news/chitajte-intervyu-z-nataliyeyu-hanenko-frizen-direktoryu-kanadskogo-institutu-ukrayinskih-studij/.

42 It is also worth recalling George G. Grabowicz's lament from 1995 that Slavic Studies has long been "hopelessly Russocentric," and that this has served as the basis for regarding the Russian perspective as the "legitimate" one; George G. Grabowicz, "Ukrainian Studies: Framing the Contexts," *Slavic Review* 54, no.3 (1995): 674–90.

43 Gunew, "'To find our measure'," printed page 12. Timothy Snyder observes that "All of the language about Ukraine as a failed state, or Ukrainians not as a real nation, or Ukrainians divided by culture—in the German language—that is not innocent. That is an inheritance of an attempt to colonise

"[t]he term 'diaspora scholars' has been used to belittle and marginalize an entire field."[44]

Here, it is worth recalling once again that, in his seminal 1995 essay, Mark von Hagen stated that, regarding Ukrainian history, "the fluidity of frontiers, the permeability of cultures, and the historic multi-ethnic society are what could make Ukrainian history a very 'modern' field of inquiry."[45] Andrii Portnov, in his 2015 essay, in particular with regards to post-Soviet Ukraine, emphasized that it is necessary to analyze its "hybridity as a distinctive and autonomous subjectivity and to fully accept that Ukraine is a complex and dynamic society, which requires nuanced inquiry."[46] However, this would apply to Ukraine in any historical period. Furthermore, it is important to depict, what Anton Kotenko refers to as the "great stories of Ukrainian entanglement with other regional contexts" and "multiplicity of Ukrainian projects, questions and discourses." It is reasonable to assume that these stories of entanglement also include the new relationships formed by Ukrainians who have spread across the world as migrants and engaged with other groups in their host countries.[47]

When it comes to articulating a broader vision for how a global 21st-century Ukrainian Studies might look, we would like to give the final word here to Emeritus Professor Marko Pavlyshyn, who pioneered the development of Ukrainian Studies in Australia. In his keynote talk at the Ukrainian Studies in Australia Symposium at the University of Melbourne in August 2025,

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a people not regarded as a people"; Timothy Snyder, addressing the Bundestag on Germany's historical responsibility towards Ukraine, 22 June 2017, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDjHw_uXeKU.

44 Olga Andriewsky, "Ukrainian Studies in Practice: A Moment of Reflection," in Volodymyr Kravchenko and Marko Robert Stech (eds), *The Unpredictable Past? Reshaping Russian, Ukrainian, and East European Studies* (Edmonton, Toronto: CIUS Press, 2024), 56.

45 Mark von Hagen, "Does Ukraine Have a History?," *Slavic Review* 54, no.3 (1995): 658–73 (670).

46 Andrii Portnov, "Post-Maidan Europe and the New Ukrainian Studies," *Slavic Review* 74, no. 4 (2015): 723–31 (730).

47 Anton Kotenko, "Imagining Modern Ukraïnica," *Ab Imperio* 1 (2015): 519–26 (524).