

Call for Papers

Mediating Voices: Translation, Representation, and Change

World Literature Studies, journal of the Institute of World Literature, SAS

Editors of the topic in the issue *World Literature Studies* 3/2026:

Ivana Hostová, Mária Kusá, Eva Spišiaková

Translation is deeply intertwined with society. The relationship between translators and society, shaped by both field-specific and broader factors such as economic models, geopolitical shifts, and political decisions, is complex. Translation as a social activity is embedded in the fabric of cultural exchange and influenced by wider cultural, political, and economic dynamics. As van Doorslaer and McMartin (2022, 1) argue, translation can be seen as a “socially situated relation with difference,” and translators and researchers as “complex, situated agents acting within and across the social spheres that condition cross-cultural, multilingual exchange.”

Following what has been termed the sociological or social turn in translation studies (cf. Angelelli 2014; van Doorslaer and McMartin 2022), and Chesterman’s (2009) proposal for translator studies, scholarship has increasingly focused on translators’ habitus and their positioning in society. Within literary contexts, this shift has illuminated how translators operate not only as cultural mediators but also as co-creators shaping literary meaning and aesthetic form. This has opened research into how translators’ agency is perceived, experienced, and conditioned by the networks, institutions, and cultural fields in which they operate. In the domain of literary translation, such networks and institutions often determine which texts, styles, and voices gain visibility, thereby influencing the evolution of literary canons and traditions. The steady stream of publications revisiting issues of translator visibility (Freeth and Treviño 2024), agency, and habitus (e.g., Atefmehr and Farahzad 2021, Djovčoš et al. 2020, Kolb and Pöllabauer 2023) suggests that many questions about how translators navigate the world—and how society perceives them—remain open. For literary translators in particular, these questions intersect with broader inquiries into authorship, creativity, and the circulation of literary value.

The issue, titled *Mediating Voices: Translation, Representation, and Change*, invites contributions that explore the reciprocal relationship between translators and the societies that shape them—and are, in turn, shaped by them. We aim to highlight translators’ positioning and agency within social processes, and to investigate how literary translation—particularly in periodicals, small presses, and other networked literary spaces—fosters aesthetic innovation, intertextual dialogue, and the transformation of literary canons.

We welcome contributions addressing questions such as (but not limited to):

- Translators’ roles in responding to societal and political challenges, including polarization, censorship, and ideological contestation in cultural contexts.
- Translation as cultural mediation: rewriting, reframing, and constructing (auto- and hetero-) images of cultures and nations.
- Translation and activism: reshaping cultural, political, or gendered narratives.

- Reconsidering literary and cultural translator visibility, invisibility, and collaboration in historical and contemporary contexts.
- The shaping of literary voices through translation, with attention to questions of gender, authorship, and the construction or suppression of authorial style.

Submission Guidelines

Please send abstracts of **450–500 words** (excluding references) by **31 January 2026** to ivana.hostova@savba.sk, masa.kusa@azet.sk, and espisiakova@ukf.sk. Submissions should include the following: author name, affiliation, title, abstract, keywords, references, and a short bio (100–150 words).

Decisions on accepted abstracts will be announced by **28 February 2026**. Selected contributors will be invited to submit full research articles of up to **5,000 words** (including abstract, endnotes, and references) for **peer review** by **15 May 2026** to the editors.

Languages of the contributions: English, French, Slovak, Czech

References

- Angelelli, Claudia V., ed. 2014. *The Sociological Turn in Translation and Interpreting Studies*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Atefmeir, Zahra, and Farzaneh Farahzad. 2021. "Microhistorical Research in Translator Studies: An Archival Methodology." *The Translator* 28, 3: 251–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2021.1944022>.
- Bielsa, Esperança. 2022. "For a Translational Sociology: Illuminating Translation in Society, Theory and Research." *European Journal of Social Theory*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310211002132>.
- Chen, Lin. 2024. "The Translator's Sociological Biography and Life Telos: The Case of John Minford." *Perspectives*: 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2024.2376713>.
- Chesterman, Andrew. 2009. "The Name and Nature of Translator Studies." *Hermes: Journal of Language and Communication in Business* 42: 13–22.
- Djovčoš, Martin, Ivana Hostová, Emília Perez, and Pavol Šveda. 2020. "The Economies of Interlingual Intercultural Transfer: Towards a Complex Picture of Translators and Interpreters in Slovakia." *World Literature Studies* 12, 1: 45–66.
- Freeth, Peter J., and Rafael Treviño. 2024. *Beyond the Translator's Invisibility: Critical Reflections and New Perspectives*. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Kolb, Waltraud, and Sonja Pöllabauer. 2023. "Women as Interpreters in Colonial New Netherland." In *Introducing New Hypertexts on Interpreting (Studies): A Tribute to Franz Pöchhacker*, ed. by Cornelia Zwischenberger, Karin Reithofer, and Sylvi Rennert, 126–46. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- van Doorslaer, Luc, and Jack McMartin. 2022. "Where Translation Studies and the Social Meet: Setting the Scene for 'Translation in Society.'" *Translation in Society* 1, 1: 1–14.