

Who Makes Translators/Translation Visible? Institutional Gatekeeping and the Popularisation of Translated Literature in Slovakia after 1989

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Abstract:

This paper examines the popularisation of translated literature in Slovakia from 1989 to the present as a historically conditioned and institutionally shaped process. Building on the assumption that translated literature does not automatically enter the target culture, it conceptualises popularisation as a structured form of cultural positioning through which visibility, reception, and symbolic value are produced within the literary field.

The study is based on a comparative analysis of three Slovak literary periodicals that have been published continuously since 1989. It investigates how these periodicals have framed translated literature across three analytical periods (1989–2000, 2000–2010, 2010–present), and how their popularisation strategies have evolved in response to post-socialist transformation, market liberalisation, digitalisation, and the rise of social media. Particular attention is paid to discursive mechanisms used to contextualise translated works and to the ways translators are named, represented, or omitted within reviews, interviews, and editorial discourse.

The analysis seeks to identify recurring strategies of mediation and institutional gatekeeping, and to assess how these strategies influence the visibility and professional positioning of translators within the Slovak literary field. By situating these developments within broader cultural and institutional shifts, the paper argues that popularisation functions not merely as dissemination, but as a structuring mechanism that actively shapes how translation is publicly understood and how translators are positioned within contemporary literary culture.

Keywords: translated literature, popularisation, translator visibility, literary periodicals, institutional gatekeeping