

Translation, censorship, and marginalized voices: Challenging power and economic barriers

IVANA HOSTOVÁ – MÁRIA KUSÁ

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Power and privilege are often manifested through erasure and suppression, operating in an inherently intersectional way, much like a fractal pattern in their complexity and recurrence. When a group asserts its identity, it frequently marginalizes or suppresses those who do not conform to its idealized or prototypical image. In the current political climate – characterized by the rise of right-wing and populist movements – it is vital to examine the nuances of cultural exchange and expose the blind spots and oversimplifications that shape our perceptions and actions. This complexity is particularly important in translation studies, since translation is a practice deeply intertwined with power, politics, economy, and identity. From the historical struggles of marginalized literatures to the contemporary politics of representation, it has played a crucial role in creation of cultures and their outer images. In many cases, translation becomes an arena of resistance where writers, translators, and readers grapple with forces of censorship, colonialism, and global power imbalances.

This issue of WORLD LITERATURE STUDIES brings together articles that explore the complex relationships between translation, censorship, and cultural identity. It investigates how translation can both reinforce and resist power structures. Apart from the discussion of Roald Dahl, the articles focus on texts and translational practices connected to Central and Eastern Europe. They explore issues such as the curation of cultural exports through colonial intermediaries, censorship in literary translation, and the impact of a country's political, ideological, and economic conditions on the reception of world literature and on minority literature. Further, they investigate how cultural actors navigate non-profit-driven areas of cultural production and how accessibility for disadvantaged groups is provided in present-day Slovakia. The issue also looks at how translators of theoretical works, such as philosophy and translation studies, engage in dialogue with the authors of the texts. In the discussion section, it explores the impact of global events on academic power dynamics, particularly in translation studies, and advocates for the decolonization of knowledge production to promote greater inclusivity and representation of minority perspectives.