

Call for Papers (1st Circular)

Translab 4: Translation and Labour

International Symposium

6-7 July 2023

University of Westminster, London, UK

Organizers: Alexa Alfer and Cornelia

Zwischenberger

Submissions

- **Deadline:** 3rd April 2023
- **Notification of acceptance:** 30th April 2023
- **Length:** 300-400-word abstract + 50-word bio note
- **Contact:** A.Alfer01@westminster.ac.uk and cornelia.zwischenberger@univie.ac.at

About

This symposium will be devoted to explorations of the concept of *labour* arising from Translab's hallmark blending of 'translation' and 'collaboration'. It posits that the concept of labour, as distinct from 'work' (Arendt 1958/1998; Narotzky 2018), warrants more sustained engagement on the part of both Translation Studies and the translation profession. While digital labour (Fuchs 2020), playbor (Kücklich 2005), fan labour (De Kosnik 2012), affective labour (Hardt 1999; Koskinen 2020), emotional labour (Hochschild 1993), or (im)material labour (Negri & Hardt 2004) may present themselves as particularly topical sites for such exploration, both labour and work are also important yet largely underarticulated dimensions in discussions about translation in a professional context and in debates about the distinction between professional and non-professional translation. Last but not least, we are keen to extend consideration of the labour concept to translation as such, and to interrogate its relevance to current debates about the translation concept.

While the concept of work is perhaps more readily associated with translation in professional discourses at least, translation as *labour*, i.e. as an activity structurally embedded in capitalist chains of surplus-value production (Zwischenberger and Alfer 2022), features far less prominently in current debates. However, foregrounding labour as a fundamental dimension of translation (and, for that matter, interpreting) allows both researchers and practitioners to investigate translation and interpreting more closely from a socioeconomic perspective. This should, in turn, help develop impactful alternatives to the prevalent 'professionalisation' discourses intended to raise the socioeconomic status of translators, and critique the ways in which many of these discourses create idealised narratives of translation and interpreting that tend to foreground the processes of work while masking the labour involved in producing outputs whose value is, quietly or overtly, appropriated by those with a stake in the means of their production. Shining a spotlight on the surplus-value inherent in translation as the commodifiable expansion of a source text thus also uncovers the

translation concept itself as the site of an unarticulated and unresolved tension between two competing and converging cultural narratives that pivot on conceptions of value as, on the one hand, inextricably bound to and, on the other, posited firmly “outside of a profit-motivated relationship” (Fayard 2021, 216).

To explore translation from the vantage point of labour and work, we invite paper proposals addressing the labour of translation and interpreting in both theory and practice, and in, among others, the following contexts, either separately or jointly where these overlap:

- Translation and interpreting as labour, work, and action
- flows of translational capital and value accumulation in professional and non-professional contexts
- translation and interpreting as digital labour
- translation and interpreting as (im)material labour
- translation and interpreting as fan labour
- translation and interpreting as affective labour and/or emotional labour
- narratives of translational labour/work and their effect(s) on the interests and status of translators and other stakeholders

Submissions

We welcome proposals for 20-minute papers in English on these and related topics. Please send your 300-400 word abstract (excl. of a basic bibliography) plus 50-word bio note to Alexa Alfer (A.Alfer01@westminster.ac.uk) and Cornelia Zwischenberger (cornelia.zwischenberger@univie.ac.at) no later than **3rd April 2023**.

Notification of acceptance: 30th April 2023

References

- Arendt, Hannah. 1958/1998. *The Human Condition*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- De Kosnik, Abigail. 2012. Fandom as Free Labor. In *Digital Labor: The Internet as Playground and Factory*, ed. by Trebor Scholz, 98–111. London/New York: Routledge.
- Fayard, Anne-Laure. 2021. Notes on the Meaning of Work: Labor, Work, and Action in the 21st Century. *Journal of Management Inquiry* 30 (2): 207–220.
- Fuchs, Christian. 2010. Labor in Informational Capitalism and on the Internet. *The Information Society* 26 (3), 179–196.
- Hardt, Michael. 1999. Affective Labour. *boundary 2* 26 (2): 89–100.

- Koskinen, Kaisa. 2020. *Translation and Affect: Essays on Sticky Affects and Translational Affective Labour*. Translation Library 152. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Kücklich, Julian. 2005. Precarious Playbour: Modders and the Digital Games Industry. *The Fibreculture Journal* (5), n.p.
- Narotzky, Susana. 2018. Rethinking the Concept of Labour. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 24, 29–43.
- Negri, Antonio, and Michael Hardt. 2004. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin.
- Zwischenberger, Cornelia, and Alexa Alfer. 2022. Translaboration: Translation and Labour. *Translation in Society* 1 (2), 200–223.