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RETHINKING TRANSLATION AS EPISTEMIC INFRASTRUCTURE: WORLDMAKING AND THE GLOBAL CIRCULATION OF KNOWLEDGE

*This article rethinks translation not simply as a linguistic transfer or a culturally mediated act of interpretation, but as an epistemic infrastructure through which knowledge becomes mobile across languages, institutions, and symbolic worlds. Drawing on key contributions from translation studies, world literature, and philosophical discussions of worldmaking, the article argues that translation should be treated not as an auxiliary practice attached to the circulation of knowledge, but as one of the conditions that make such circulation possible in the first place. Methodologically, the study combines conceptual analysis, comparative theoretical synthesis, and a focused illustrative case. It traces the movement of translation theory from transfer-based models toward epistemic mediation, worldmaking, and infrastructural thinking, and tests the analytical value of this framework through the English-language publication of Serhiy Zhadan's *Sky Above Kharkiv: Dispatches from the Ukrainian Front*. The article demonstrates that translation does more than transmit meaning or experience across linguistic boundaries: it helps organise the conditions under which texts, concepts, and historically situated forms of knowledge become intelligible, legitimate, and institutionally available in new interpretive contexts. Particular attention is paid to the relation between translation, worldmaking, and the cross-cultural mobility of knowledge, as well as to the role of translation in shaping visibility, authority, and asymmetry within global intellectual exchange. The article concludes that the concept of epistemic infrastructure expands the explanatory reach of translation studies by repositioning translation from a secondary mediating practice to a constitutive condition of knowledge mobility in a multilingual world.*

Key words: translation studies; epistemic infrastructure; worldmaking; knowledge mobility; global knowledge circulation; cultural translation.

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Articulation of the problem and its practical significance. Translation can no longer be described adequately as a secondary linguistic operation. In recent decades, the discipline has evolved from equivalence-based and text-centric models to more expansive cultural, sociological, and ideological frameworks that regard translation as a historically contextualised, norm-regulated, and power-infused activity (Bassnett, 2014; Toury, 2012; Venuti, 2013; Tymoczko, 2014). This expansion of the field has made it possible to view translation not simply as mediation between languages, but as a practice implicated in the production and circulation of knowledge across cultural boundaries.

Current global intellectual exchange increasingly depends on translational processes that decide which ideas are visible, portable, and accepted by institutions in different cultural and academic settings. Translational processes move texts, concepts, and interpretive frameworks across languages, yet their epistemic function remains under-theorised. Translation has been extensively analysed as rewriting, cultural negotiation, and ideological intervention (Lefevere, 1992; Venuti, 2013; Wolf and Fukari, 2007); however, it is less frequently scrutinised as an infrastructure for the global organisation, transmission, and transformation of knowledge. This disparity is especially pronounced in the realm of world literature, where the transnational flow of texts is intrinsically linked to the translational conditions that facilitate such movement (Damrosch, 2003; Apter, 2013; Forsdick, 2024).

The central problem addressed here is the theoretical inadequacy of models that conceptualise translation primarily as transfer, rather than as an epistemic mechanism of worldmaking. If worlds are not merely given but symbolically constructed, as Goodman (1978) contends, then translation must be

reconceptualised as a principal practice through which such worlds are interconnected, recontextualised, and rendered comprehensible to new interpretive communities. From this standpoint, translation does not merely replicate meaning; it actively engages in the formation of epistemic connections among cultures, languages, and systems of knowledge (Ricoeur, 2006; Cassin, 2014).

The practical value of this study lies in its ability to refine the conceptual lexicon of translation studies and to provide a more suitable framework for examining the cross-cultural mobility of knowledge in multilingual contexts. This viewpoint is particularly significant for modern humanities research, comparative literary studies, intercultural communication, and the examination of world literature, where translation serves not merely as a supplementary process but as a fundamental framework for intellectual exchange. Reconceptualising translation in this manner possesses significant methodological importance, enabling scholars to more accurately examine the interplay between linguistic mediation, cultural visibility, and epistemic authority in the generation of global knowledge.

The methodological framework of the article combines conceptual analysis, comparative theoretical synthesis, and a focused case-based illustration. It brings into dialogue major contributions from translation studies, world literature, and philosophical approaches to meaning in order to clarify the shift from transfer-based models to the concept of translation as epistemic infrastructure. To test the analytical value of this framework, the article examines one translational case of cross-cultural epistemic circulation: the English-language publication of Serhiy Zhadan's *Sky Above Kharkiv: Dispatches from the Ukrainian Front*. This methodological design allows the argument to move beyond theoretical summary and toward conceptual demonstration.

Examination of contemporary research and publications. Recent scholarship in translation studies has made it clear that translation cannot be reduced to a narrowly linguistic process of interlingual transfer. The shift from equivalence-based models to cultural, sociological, and ideological approaches has significantly expanded the field's object of inquiry. It has also made it possible to understand translation as a historically and institutionally situated practice (Bassnett, 2014; Toury, 2012; Lefevere, 1992; Venuti, 2013; Wolf and Fukari, 2007; Tymoczko, 2014). This development is especially significant for the current study as it establishes the conceptual framework for reconceptualising translation not merely as the transfer of meaning between languages, but as a process integral to the creation, dissemination, and transformation of meaning across cultures.

One of the most productive developments within this broader disciplinary shift is the growing connection between translation and world literature. David Damrosch's significant assertion that world literature is writing that "gains in translation" and transitions into "an elliptical space created between the source and receiving cultures" has contributed to the conceptualisation of circulation as an essential characteristic of literary worldliness (Damrosch, 2003, p. 281). For the present argument, this matters because Damrosch helps establish circulation as a defining condition of world literature, yet he does not fully explain the translational mechanisms through which texts become epistemically mobile across languages and institutions. Yet this model, for all its importance, does not fully account for the ways in which translation reshapes the international mobility of concepts, categories, and interpretive frameworks. More recent interventions sharpen the debate by shifting attention from circulation alone to the epistemic conditions of translation. Forsdick (2024, p. 1) posits the existence of "a set of translational epistemologies" that enhance "linguistic sensitivity and global relationality in the construction of knowledge". In the context of this article, the significance of Forsdick's intervention lies in the fact that it moves the discussion from literary circulation alone to the epistemic conditions under which translation helps organise the production and reception of knowledge. This assertion elucidates a significant tension in the field: translation is crucial for the dissemination of world literature, yet its epistemic function within that process remains insufficiently theorised.

Philosophical and culturally oriented approaches to translation have opened a parallel line of inquiry. Ricoeur's thoughts on translation as "linguistic hospitality" characterise translation as "the act of inhabiting the word of the Other paralleled by the act of receiving the word of the Other into one's own home" (Ricoeur, 2006, pp. 19-20). What this perspective makes visible, for the purposes of the present article, is that translation does not simply substitute one linguistic form for another; it reorders the very conditions under which alterity becomes intelligible within the receiving culture. Goodman's idea of worldmaking provides a philosophical foundation for perceiving worlds not as inherent entities

but as constructed symbolic frameworks. When considered in conjunction with translation theory, this viewpoint posits that translation transcends the mere conveyance of pre-existing meanings across languages; it actively engages in the creation, recontextualization, and contestation of realities as coherent systems of knowledge (Goodman, 1978; Ricoeur, 2006; Cassin, 2014).

The debate acquires particular urgency in the context of digital modernity and intensified transnational communication. Cronin contends that the current era, often referred to as the information age, “should more properly be termed the translation age” (Cronin, 2013, p. 11). For this article, Cronin’s claim is important not simply because it emphasises the ubiquity of translation, but because it points toward a more structural insight: translation operates as a condition of global communicability rather than as a secondary response to it. This assertion is not solely rhetorical. It emphasises the degree to which global communication relies on acts of conversion, mediation, and recontextualization that possess a translational structure, even if they are not traditionally identified as translation. In these circumstances, translation is pivotal not only for the dissemination of literature but also for the transnational dissemination of concepts, disciplinary terminologies, and epistemic authority across institutional and linguistic boundaries. This study is pertinent beyond the confines of translation studies; it engages with overarching enquiries regarding the international legibility, cultural portability, and intellectual authority of knowledge.

Yet a major gap remains. Current scholarship has thoroughly analysed translation as rewriting, visibility, ideological mediation, intercultural negotiation, and sociological positioning (Lefevere, 1992; Venuti, 2013; Wolf and Fukari, 2007; Tymoczko, 2014). Nevertheless, the concept of translation as epistemic infrastructure has not been adequately defined as a cohesive theoretical framework that can integrate discussions on world literature, knowledge dissemination, and worldmaking. This gap is especially significant for modern humanities research, as multilingual circulation increasingly influences the definition of knowledge, the mobility of categories, and the visibility of texts within global academic and cultural frameworks.

The **significance** of the current study resides in its endeavour to enhance the conceptual lexicon of translation studies by framing translation as an essential element of global knowledge exchange, rather than as a mere ancillary process of textual transfer. This viewpoint is particularly beneficial for research in translation studies, comparative literature, world literature, and intercultural humanities, as it enables scholars to scrutinise the relationship between linguistic mediation, cultural circulation, and epistemic legitimacy with greater precision. It also builds a stronger analytical link between translation theory and current discussions about global intellectual asymmetries, multilingual knowledge production, and the politics of interpretive access.

The article accordingly pursues three interrelated objectives: first, to examine how recent translation scholarship has moved beyond transfer-based models; second, to show how the concepts of world literature and worldmaking illuminate translation’s role in the circulation of knowledge; and third, to propose translation as epistemic infrastructure as a productive framework for understanding the mobility and transformation of global knowledge.

Presentation of the primary content.

From transfer to epistemic mediation.

For much of its disciplinary history, translation was understood primarily through the paradigm of transfer. In this context, the translator functioned as a mediator, with the primary responsibility of transferring semantic content between linguistic systems with maximal accuracy. Historically, this perspective was fruitful; it allowed the discipline to articulate enquiries regarding equivalence, fidelity, loss, gain, and textual correspondence with significant analytical accuracy. However, its explanatory power diminishes when translation is analysed not merely as a textual operation, but as a practice situated within cultural asymmetries, institutional frameworks, and transnational networks of meaning. The transfer paradigm effectively encapsulates the transition between languages; however, it inadequately addresses the evolution of concepts, categories, and forms of intelligibility as they migrate from one epistemic environment to another.

This limitation helps explain why translation studies gradually moved beyond narrowly transfer-based models. The growth of the field to include cultural, ideological, sociological, and philosophical approaches has shown that translation is no longer adequately described as the stable transfer of meaning

from one language to another. Instead, it reframes meanings, redistributes them across contexts, and often assigns them new functions within different interpretive communities. What is at stake, then, is not only what gets conveyed, but what becomes thinkable and legitimate within the receiving context. The shift is methodological, but it is also conceptual: translation no longer appears as the relocation of pre-existing meaning, but as a form of **epistemic mediation** that repositions what can be known and understood. This larger shift can be seen in many important areas of the field, such as the sociological and digital turns, which focus more and more on the systemic and infrastructural conditions of translation work. For instance, Cronin asserts that what is often referred to as the information age “should more properly be termed the translation age” (2013, p. 11), a characterisation that highlights the degree to which modern circulation relies on translational processes rather than mere transfer.

To reconceptualise translation as epistemic mediation necessitates a more robust hermeneutic lexicon. In this context, Ricoeur’s concept of “linguistic hospitality” is particularly fruitful. He characterises it as “the act of inhabiting the word of the Other, paralleled by the act of receiving the word of the Other into one’s own home, one’s own dwelling” (Ricoeur, 2006, pp. 19-20). This formulation fundamentally transforms the theoretical framework of translation. The focus has shifted from the transfer of a static semantic unit between codes to a relational act where comprehension occurs through encounter, risk, and negotiated reciprocity. Translation here becomes a way for one language to host another: it takes in otherness, but it also changes the way the receiving language thinks about things. For that reason, transfer alone is too narrow a term for what translation does. It acts as a bridge between different systems of meaning and, in doing so, alters the conditions under which understanding can be shared.

Steiner broadens the argument in a different register. *After Babel* is important not just because it adds to the list of translation theory books, but because it puts translation in a bigger context of interpretation. Steiner’s methodology does not separate translation from the hermeneutic processes that form the foundation of all comprehension. Once translation is situated within this interpretive framework, it can no longer be regarded as a mere secondary consequence of pre-existing meaning. It instead becomes one of the main places where meaning is tested, negotiated, and rebuilt. According to this perspective, every act of translation is inherently epistemic, as it determines not only the manner in which something is articulated elsewhere but also the ways in which it may be comprehended in different contexts (Steiner, 1998).

This reorientation is especially important for this article because the shift from transfer to epistemic mediation sets up the ideas that will be used in the argument that follows. If translation is solely regarded as transfer, its function remains secondary; it manifests as a conduit transporting content between pre-established realms. If translation is regarded as epistemic mediation, it becomes evident that translational acts do not merely link worlds retrospectively. They are involved in the processes that make those worlds available to each other, open to negotiation, and able to move around the world. Translation functions not at the periphery of knowledge, but within its conditions of circulation. At this point, translation theory enters a wider debate about worldmaking and the global organisation of knowledge. This is not just a metaphorical addition; it is a necessary step in the analysis. Forsdick’s recent discourse on “translational epistemologies” is particularly significant, as he explicitly associates translation with “linguistic sensitivity and global relationality in the construction of knowledge” (2024, p. 1). The phrase is significant as it highlights what transfer models fail to elucidate: translation not only accompanies ideas in motion but also contributes to the relational conditions that render them translatable, mobile, and meaningful across borders.

From this standpoint, the transition from transfer to epistemic mediation ought not to be regarded as a repudiation of prior translation theory, but rather as its essential augmentation. Equivalence, fidelity, and semantic correspondence continue to be analytically valuable; however, they are inadequate for encapsulating the entirety of translational activity in a multilingual and asymmetrical context. What is needed instead is a framework capable of explaining how translation not only conveys meaning, but also reshapes the conditions under which it is understood, redistributes epistemic authority, and enables knowledge to move across cultures. This expanded comprehension facilitates the subsequent phase of the discourse: translation should be regarded not merely as a conduit between texts, but as an active agent in the construction of reality.

Translation and worldmaking.

Once translation is understood as epistemic mediation rather than mere transfer, a further question emerges: what exactly is being mediated? This is where **worldmaking** becomes analytically useful. Translation does not operate among neutral linguistic units detached from broader symbolic formations. It intervenes in systems of meaning that organise reality and make it intelligible. To translate, then, is not simply to move discourse across languages, but to reposition it within another horizon of understanding. For that reason, worldmaking offers a more productive framework than models confined to semantic transfer: it allows translation to be understood as a practice involved in the making, transformation, and circulation of interpretive worlds.

Goodman's philosophy matters here because it challenges the assumption that worlds are simply given and then described. They are constructed through symbol systems, classifications, and representational practices (Goodman, 1978). Read in relation to translation studies, this insight has major consequences. If symbolic worlds are constructed, translation cannot be reduced to the transfer of fixed meanings between pre-existing realities. It becomes one of the practices through which symbolic orders are reconfigured for new audiences and new regimes of intelligibility. Translation participates in the symbolic construction of worlds not only by connecting linguistic communities, but by reshaping the terms under which knowledge, value, and experience become recognisable within them.

This helps explain why translation has long exceeded the status of a secondary textual procedure. Lefevere's seminal analysis of translation as a form of rewriting indicated this trajectory by illustrating that translation is intricately involved in the formation of literary visibility, canonicity, and cultural prestige (Lefevere, 1992). A translated text does not merely replicate an original in a different linguistic format; it engages in a new cultural economy that inevitably alters its function, resonance, and authority. Venuti's work radicalises this understanding by demonstrating that translation is never ideologically neutral; the principles of fluency, domestication, and readability serve as mechanisms through which foreign texts are integrated into the receiving culture in selective and uneven manners (Venuti, 2013). In both instances, translation manifests not as a mere transparent conduit, but as a fundamental act of world-framing. It creates cultural legibility, but it also controls difference. Taken separately, Lefevere and Venuti broaden the cultural scope of translation theory; taken together, they make it possible to argue that translation does not merely circulate texts but actively structures the conditions under which literary and cultural worlds become visible, legible, and hierarchised.

This framework helps draw these insights together more systematically. What enters another language does not remain intact. It is reassembled through interpretation, reformulation, omission, emphasis, and contextual reframing. For that reason, translation is productive rather than merely reproductive. It does not replicate a symbolic order in a new linguistic medium; it reconstitutes that order within the conceptual norms of the receiving culture. In this sense, translation creates new relations between symbolic formations rather than simply reproducing an already completed one.

This argument becomes especially revealing in the field of world literature. Damrosch's assertion that world literature "gains in translation" directly points to the constructive role of translation in literary circulation (Damrosch, 2003, p. 281). Yet the implications of this insight extend beyond literary mobility alone. Texts gain not only wider readership in translation, but entry into new interpretive frameworks. Forsdick's discussion of "translational epistemologies" sharpens this point by shifting attention from circulation as movement to circulation as the relational construction of knowledge (Forsdick, 2024, p. 1). Translation thus appears not as an accessory to world literature, but as one of the mechanisms through which literary and intellectual worlds become globally connected.

At the same time, the symbolic construction of worlds through translation should not be idealised as a seamless enhancement of reciprocal comprehension. Apter's criticism of world literature and her focus on untranslatability are important corrections here (Apter, 2013). Not everything translates well, and not every idea can be fully expressed in translation. In fact, the tensions, resistances, and imbalances of translation are part of the process of making the world. Translation does not erase epistemic difference. It stages it, negotiates it, and at times intensifies it. This is what makes worldmaking especially productive here: it preserves both translation's generative force and its internal tensions. Translation helps constitute worlds, yet it also introduces tension, contestation, and asymmetry into them.

Ricoeur's concept of linguistic hospitality introduces an extra dimension to this conversation. If translation entails incorporating the word of the Other into one's own space, then worldmaking is not merely an act of symbolic construction but also an act of relational accommodation (Ricoeur, 2006, pp. 19-20). However, such accommodation never transpires in isolation. Much depends on what the receiving language can accommodate, what it resists, and how it is altered in the process. Translation therefore does more than provide access to another world; it also reshapes the receiving world by compelling it to negotiate with foreignness. This dynamic bolsters the assertion that translation is not extrinsic to worldmaking, but rather one of its functional modalities.

Nonetheless, for the purposes of this article's argument, worldmaking remains an incomplete conceptual endpoint. It is an essential step because it clarifies the productive, constitutive, and contentious dimensions of translation. However, the concept is inadequate unless it elucidates how these acts of mediation are maintained, replicated, and structured within broader cultural and institutional frameworks. Translation certainly enables contact between symbolic worlds, but it also performs a more structural function. It renders them mobile within larger networks of circulation. For that reason, worldmaking must be extended into a more systemic account. The present article therefore treats translation not as an after-effect of intellectual exchange, but as one of its constitutive infrastructures.

Translation as infrastructure of global knowledge.

If translation is perceived as epistemic mediation and, additionally, as a practice of worldmaking, the subsequent analytical task is to elucidate how these processes attain systemic significance. This is precisely the point at which the concept of **infrastructure** becomes analytically indispensable. Mediation refers to the relational act; worldmaking elucidates the productive and constitutive aspects of translation; however, infrastructure encapsulates the enduring, facilitative, and frequently opaque conditions that facilitate the circulation of knowledge across languages, institutions, and cultures. Translation should be regarded not merely as an occurrence between texts, but as a fundamental condition for global intellectual exchange.

Conceptualising translation as infrastructure does not reduce it to a mechanical support system. Infrastructure here refers to the set of conditions that make circulation possible and also affect its shape, direction, and limits. The infrastructural function of translation becomes especially visible in the context of global knowledge. It enables such movement, but it also filters, reframes, and ranks what becomes internationally legible. It doesn't just open up channels of transmission; it also sets the rules for how knowledge gets into larger networks of recognition.

This infrastructural viewpoint elucidates why translation holds a more pivotal role in modern intellectual discourse than transfer-based models can account for. In this context, Cronin's assertion that the current era should be regarded as "the translation age" (2013, p. 11) is particularly pertinent. What is at stake in this formulation is not simply the frequency of cross-linguistic communication, but the extent to which translation underpins the possibility of global communicability itself. In a multilingual world, ideas do not travel solely by virtue of their content. They become mobile because translational mediation renders them intelligible and usable across languages and institutions. In this regard, translation is not an addition to global knowledge; rather, it is a prerequisite for the existence of global knowledge.

This assertion also repositions translation studies within the humanities. Instead of seeing translation as a secondary field that deals with secondary textual operations, this view puts it at the center of discussions about intellectual mobility, cultural legitimacy, and epistemic asymmetry. The point becomes particularly clear in debates on world literature. Damrosch's idea of literature that "gains in translation" (2003, p. 281) already suggests that circulation is not just about spreading geographically, but also about changing through translation. Forsdick elucidates this rationale further by discussing "translational epistemologies" and their function in promoting "linguistic sensitivity and global relationality in the construction of knowledge" (2024, p. 1). Taken together, these arguments suggest that translational mediation is not an afterthought in the global life of texts and ideas; it is one of the ways that they are chosen, made known, and added to larger systems of knowledge.

At this point, infrastructure becomes a more precise term than worldmaking alone. Worldmaking helps explain how translation participates in the creation and recontextualisation of symbolic worlds. Infrastructure, by contrast, clarifies the mechanisms that sustain such acts through repeatable and

scalable patterns of circulation. A single translation may bring two cultures into contact; translational infrastructure establishes the broader systems through which such encounters become durable and consequential. Certain bodies of knowledge acquire international authority through sustained acts of translation embedded in publishing networks, academic institutions, educational practices, and regimes of cultural prestige, while others remain peripheral or inaccessible. Translational infrastructure thus does not merely connect existing centres of knowledge; it also shapes the uneven architecture of global knowledge itself.

A particularly telling example of translation as epistemic infrastructure is provided by the English-language publication of Serhiy Zhadan's *Sky Above Kharkiv: Dispatches from the Ukrainian Front* (2023). What matters here is not simply the availability of a Ukrainian wartime text in English, but the way translation transforms local testimony into internationally legible knowledge. Emerging from Zhadan's wartime writings from Kharkiv and published by Yale University Press in the Margellos World Republic of Letters series, the volume does more than transmit experience across languages. It relocates that experience within a wider institutional space in which Ukrainian witnessing can be read, taught, reviewed, and discussed beyond the immediacy of news coverage. In the English-language edition, these wartime writings no longer function only as immediate testimony from within the event, but also as institutionally mediated witness literature that can be taught, reviewed, and incorporated into broader transnational discussions of war, memory, and cultural survival. What begins to move across linguistic and institutional boundaries is not merely narrative content, but a specifically Ukrainian way of knowing the war: its urban rhythm, civic strain, affective pressure, and lived geography. In this case, the infrastructural role of translation becomes visible here because it does not simply carry experience outward; it helps create the conditions under which that experience becomes credible, intelligible, and historically meaningful beyond its original linguistic setting. Zhadan's English edition shows with particular clarity that translation is not something added after knowledge begins to move. It is one of the means by which that movement becomes possible in the first place.

This is also why the infrastructural model cannot be separated from questions of power. Lefevere's theory of rewriting shows that translation participates in the regulation of literary fame and cultural prestige (Lefevere, 1992). Venuti's critique of domestication demonstrates how translational fluency can naturalise unequal relations between source and target cultures (Venuti, 2013). Wolf and Fukari's sociological perspective likewise indicates that translation is embedded in organised networks of agents, institutions, and norms (Wolf and Fukari, 2007). Taken together, these perspectives show that translational infrastructure is never neutral. Like any infrastructure, it enables circulation selectively. It determines not only that ideas travel, but also which forms of knowledge travel more easily, in what form, and under whose conditions of intelligibility.

From this standpoint, epistemic infrastructure is not merely a metaphorical enhancement of translation's significance. It is an idea that makes the two functions of translation within global knowledge systems clearer. First, it enables movement across linguistic boundaries by rendering texts, ideas, and conceptual frameworks mobile beyond their original contexts. Second, it regulates intelligibility: it changes, frames, and sometimes even changes what can be understood as meaningful in the target context. The two functions are inseparable. Knowledge does not circulate first and acquire interpretation later; it moves through interpretation from the outset. Its infrastructural role lies precisely in binding circulation to mediation and mobility to epistemic change.

This method also helps to clarify the main point of the article. To describe translation in infrastructural terms does not mean ignoring its textual, hermeneutic, or cultural aspects; instead, it means putting them all together into a bigger explanatory model. Transfer theory elucidates movement at the level of meaning; epistemic mediation elucidates relational interpretation; worldmaking elucidates symbolic production; and infrastructure elucidates the systemic conditions that render these processes durable, repeatable, and globally significant. In this regard, the article's argument is fully articulated: translation serves as the epistemic infrastructure facilitating the movement of worlds, the global mobility of knowledge, and the interrelation of interpretive systems.

This shift has broader consequences for the field. It indicates that translation studies can enhance the examination of linguistic and literary exchange, as well as inform wider discussions regarding the production, distribution, and legitimisation of global knowledge. Multilingual circulation is never merely technical. It belongs to the history of ideas itself. Translation does not stand outside global knowledge as an ancillary tool. It operates within its architecture of global knowledge, shaping the routes through which ideas become accessible, authoritative, and world-forming. Translation should therefore be understood not merely as a response to linguistic plurality, but as one of the conditions under which that plurality becomes historically and epistemically productive.

Conclusions and prospects for further exploration. The argument developed in this article leads to a clear conclusion: translation should be understood not as a secondary mediating practice attached to the movement of knowledge, but as one of the conditions that make such movement possible in the first place. What is at stake here is more than a terminological refinement. To conceptualise translation as epistemic infrastructure is to recognise that knowledge does not move internationally in a neutral or self-sustaining form; it becomes mobile through translational processes that render it legible, credible, and institutionally available across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

The central contribution of the article lies in this shift of perspective. The concept of epistemic infrastructure moves translation from the status of transfer or auxiliary mediation to that of a constitutive condition of knowledge mobility, thereby extending the explanatory reach of translation studies in relation to world literature, multilingual knowledge production, and the uneven circulation of cultural authority. This change matters because it allows translation to be analysed not only in terms of what it conveys, but also in terms of what it enables, organises, and selectively legitimises.

Such a reconceptualisation also alters the theoretical scope of translation studies itself. It brings into sharper focus the fact that translational mediation does not simply connect already existing worlds of meaning. It helps structure the routes through which those worlds become available to one another, enter broader regimes of interpretation, and acquire different forms of epistemic force. In this sense, translation emerges not at the margins of global knowledge, but within its architecture.

The analytical value of this approach lies in its capacity to integrate several lines of inquiry that are too often treated separately. It links debates on world literature with questions of cross-cultural knowledge mobility; it connects cultural and hermeneutic approaches to translation with institutional and infrastructural analysis; and it provides a more precise vocabulary for describing how multilingual mediation shapes visibility, access, and authority. The case of Serhiy Zhadan's *Sky Above Kharkiv* illustrates this point with particular clarity: translation does not simply transmit experience outward, but helps create the conditions under which that experience becomes internationally readable as historically grounded and culturally situated knowledge.

Several directions for further research emerge from this argument. One involves applying the concept of epistemic infrastructure to other translational domains, including academic discourse, war writing, digital archives, and educational circulation. Another concerns the politics of asymmetry: future work may examine more closely how translational infrastructure privileges certain languages, genres, and epistemic traditions while delaying or marginalising others. Further research might also explore how translators, publishers, universities, and platforms function together as mediating agents in the global organisation of knowledge. In this way, the concept advanced here is intended not as a final formula, but as a framework for rethinking how translation shapes the mobility, legitimacy, and uneven accessibility of knowledge in a multilingual world.

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Остап Бодик

ПЕРЕОСМИСЛЕННЯ ПЕРЕКЛАДУ ЯК ЕПІСТЕМІЧНОЇ ІНФРАСТРУКТУРИ: СВІТОТВОРЕННЯ ТА ГЛОБАЛЬНА ЦИРКУЛЯЦІЯ ЗНАННЯ

У статті запропоновано переосмислення перекладу не лише як міжмовного перенесення змісту чи культурно опосередкованого акту інтерпретації, а як епістемічної інфраструктури, через яку знання набуває мобільності в різних мовах, інституціях і символічних світах. Дослідження спрямоване на подолання теоретичних обмежень трансферної моделі перекладу та на обґрунтування підходу, який дає змогу розглядати переклад як одну з умов глобальної циркуляції знання, а не як вторинну практику, що лише супроводжує цей процес. Методологічну основу статті становлять концептуальний аналіз, порівняльний теоретичний синтез і фокусований ілюстративний кейс. У роботі зіставлено ключові ідеї перекладознавства, студій світової літератури та філософських підходів до світотворення з метою простежити рух від трансферних моделей перекладу до понять епістемічного посередництва, *worldmaking* та інфраструктурного мислення.

У результаті дослідження доведено, що переклад не вичерпується передаванням значення між мовами. Він бере участь у формуванні умов, за яких тексти, поняття та історично зумовлені форми знання стають зрозумілими, легітимними й інституційно доступними в нових інтерпретаційних контекстах. Показано, що концепт *worldmaking* дає змогу пояснити продуктивний характер перекладу, оскільки переклад не відтворює готові смислові світи, а переоформлює їх для інших культурних та епістемічних спільнот. Водночас обґрунтовано, що поняття *worldmaking* саме по собі не охоплює системного виміру перекладацької діяльності. У зв'язку з цим у статті запропоновано трактувати переклад як епістемічну інфраструктуру – тобто як сукупність умов, механізмів і повторюваних практик, через які знання стає мобільним, міжкультурно читабельним і глобально значущим.

Аналітичну цінність запропонованого підходу продемонстровано на прикладі англomовного видання книжки Сергія Жадана *Sky Above Kharkiv: Dispatches from the Ukrainian Front*, що розглядається як випадок трансляції локально вкоріненого українського досвіду у простір міжнародної епістемічної видимості. Цей кейс показує, що переклад не лише передає досвід іншою мовою, а й організовує умови його глобальної інтерпретації, рецепції, викладання й культурної легітимації. Теоретичне значення статті полягає в розширенні пояснювального потенціалу сучасного перекладознавства, зокрема в його зв'язку зі студіями світової

літератури, багатомовним виробництвом знання та проблемою нерівномірної циркуляції культурного авторитету. Практична цінність роботи пов'язана з можливістю застосування запропонованої рамки в перекладознавстві, порівняльному літературознавстві, дослідженнях воєнного письма, академічного дискурсу та глобальної мобільності знання. Зроблено висновок, що поняття епістемічної інфраструктури змінює статус перекладу в сучасній гуманітаристиці: переклад постає не як допоміжне посередництво, а як одна з конститутивних умов руху знання в багатомовному світі.

Ключові слова: *перекладознавство; епістемічна інфраструктура; світотворення; мобільність знання; глобальна циркуляція знання; культурний переклад.*