

Maitland, S. (2023). Editorial. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 39, 1-2.  
<https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2023.062>

This article is publish under a *Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International* (CC BY):  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>



© Sarah Maitland, 2023

**Editorial****Sarah Maitland, Goldsmiths, University of London**

This special issue 39 of the *Journal of Specialised Translation*, entitled *Universalist, User-centred, and Proactive Approaches in Media Accessibility*, and guest edited by Gian Maria Greco and Pablo Romero-Fresco, features seven papers covering a range of theoretical, methodological and practical reflexions in relation to media accessibility, and marks the launch of an exciting new inclusion within the journal's scope for publication: video essays.

Issue 39 opens with papers by Louise Fryer, on the intercultural competence of audio describers, and Maija Hirvonen, Marika Hakola and Michael Klade, on collaborative translation and user-centred accessibility in cooperative audio description. Sarah McDonagh provides an in-depth case study of descriptive guides for a series of video tours of the former Maze and Long Kesh prison in Northern Ireland, and Tiina Tuominen, Maarit Koponen, Kaisa Vitikainen, Umut Sulubacak and Jörg Tiedemann address the challenges and opportunities of automatic subtitling. Zoe Moores tackles the question of integrated access at live events, and Marcela Tancredi, Leticia Lorier, Yanina Boria, Florencia Fascioli-Álvarez consider a case of inclusive and co-creative sign language translation and interpreting.

In addition to seven articles, this special issue has expanded the accepted format for the first time, to include video essays. The video essay, as the guest editors point out, is just one of the many transformations within scholarship and research brought about by digital technologies, and takes the form of "a short video that illustrates a topic, expresses an opinion and develops a thesis statement based on research through editing video, sound and image" (John Cabot University, n.d.). Discussing Matt Zoller Seitz's (2009) five-part series of video essays on Wes Anderson, Lavik (2012, n.p.) highlights some advantages of this form: "[...] rather than putting forward his argument as text, it is presented in the form of a voiceover accompanied by carefully edited footage from Anderson's work, sometimes juxtaposed by the work of the major artists that have inspired it. This allows Zoller Seitz to make his case with far greater economy, precision, and persuasion than a written piece with some frame grabs could hope to accomplish."

Indeed, the video essay form spans both traditional video presentations and more artistic interventions (as in the case of Zoller Seitz), and includes videos that cross disciplinary borders to become fully-fledged essay-films. Increasingly, video essays are seen as an accepted format for journal publication in areas such as cinema, media studies, and ethnography, where the video is usually accompanied by a research statement by the author and often a short critical comment by at least one of its peer reviewers. In this sense, the final scholarly product is hybrid and remains incomplete without the accompanying research statement and vice versa. For this

reason, the review can be considered an integral part of the final product and acts a tool for critical reading of both the video and research statement. It was with these opportunities in mind that the guest editors expanded the call for papers for this special issue to include this innovative form and format.

The two videos we commit to you in this special issue represent, in the words of the guest editors, an important starting point. In "An essay film: 'Thinking *with* water'", Kate Dangerfield explores the form of the essay film itself, as a useful means for thinking through accessibility, while Irene Hermosa-Ramírez, in her essay film "Embracing community-based participatory research in Media Accessibility", calls for creative approaches to media accessibility that invite 'experts', traditionally conceived, to delegate agency. By receiving — and interpreting — the two videos through the lens of the provided research statements — as the guest editors ask us to do — these framing narratives become a sort of 'director's commentary', inviting JoSTrans readers to become an audience of listeners and viewers engaged actively in the construction of meaning and the work of reflexion. As valuable paratexts to this experience, William Brown's reviews of the two video essays lend a depth and richness to the acts of reading, listening and viewing. As we take these exciting steps, we hope you enjoy this special issue and look forward to more of its kind in the future.

Sarah Maitland  
Deputy Editor

## References

- **Lavik, Erlend** (2012). "The Video Essay: The Future of Academic Film and Television Criticism?" *Frames Cinema Journal* 1(1), <http://framescinemajournal.com/article/thevideoessaythefuture> (consulted 19.11.2022).
- **Zoller Seitz, Matt** (2009). "The Substance of Style, Pt 1". *Moving Image Source*, <http://www.movingimagesource.us/articles/the-substance-of-style-pt-1-20090330> (consulted 19.11.2022)

## Websites

- **John Cabot University** (n.d.). <https://johncabot.libguides.com/communications/videoessay> (consulted 19.11.2022).