



A Space for Translation: Thresholds of Interpretation

Presentation Details	
Title of Paper:	The Space and Place of Literary Translation
Speaker:	Timothy Craig HUSON, Associate Professor, School of English and Education, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies
Abstract:	<p>Discussion of literary translation must be based on a notion of literature. Here, I borrow Blanchot's term <i>l'espace litteraire</i>, follow it through using Freud, and then consider the space of literary translation and what it entails for fidelity and creativity.</p> <p>In Freud's "The Poet and Phantasizing," the space of literature, that of phantasy and phantasizing, is personalized, rule-defying, and freely designed. Here, words do not refer to the world directly, but only by detour through a desire once fulfilled in early childhood experience in formative interaction with the parents.</p> <p>Literary translation and literature have the same <i>space</i> (if the translation is literature at all), and a particular literary translation occupies the same <i>place</i> as a particular work of literature, though in a different natural language. What does this entail for literary translation? With fidelity as the goal, genuine translation should strive to fill the same literary space and place as the original -- a metaphor in the original should, as much as possible, remain the same metaphor in the translation. Accommodation to the reader must be done with awareness that the space of literature already differs from that of ordinary language and thought.</p> <p>While the creativity of the original involves an original phantasy-work (like Freud's dream-work), the translator will not employ a new phantasy-work, but rather will transmit that of the original, using a creativity of a different sort in searching for the right word or expression to enhance fidelity.</p>

Author's Biography

Timothy Craig HUSON is an associate professor in the School of English and Education at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, in Guangzhou. He researches comparative literary culture, including philosophy and fiction in various media. He has served as volume editor and co-editor of several volumes of *Chinese Literature and Culture*, a journal devoted to literary translation and comparative culture.