



A Space for Translation: Thresholds of Interpretation

Presentation Details	
Title of Paper:	(Re)creating Spaces to Reconstruct Ideas in New Trends: Knowledge Innovation in the Translation of Zhu Xi’s Concept of <i>Li</i> by Daniel K. Gardner, Julia Ching, and Joseph A. Adler
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Abstract:	<p>This paper examines contemporary English translation of Zhu Xi’s concept of <i>li</i> 理 in the scholarship of Daniel K. Gardner, Julia Ching, and Joseph A. Adler. Adopting Arthur Schopenhauer’s view of language learning as mapping “new spheres of concepts” in the learner’s mind, the paper argues that translation enables the creation or renewal of conceptual spaces for reconstructing and renovating ideas across traditions and cultures. Zhu’s concept of <i>li</i> has continued to stimulate interesting debates in English regarding the meanings of different domains of knowledge. The increasing variety of renditions of <i>li</i> (“principle,” “law,” “trend,” “element,” “pattern,” “order,” and many other interpretations) and the revisionist discussions about them suggest how translators over time have been creating or recreating conceptual spaces to reconstruct knowledge via their engagements with Zhu. While early translators James Legge and Joseph Percy Bruce sought to develop profound connections between Christian and Confucian ideas in translating <i>li</i>, contemporary translators make other radical moves. Gardner’s translation of <i>li</i> as the “all-embracing principle” generates a space for cross-cultural new inquiries into the ideas regarding truth and humanity. For Ching, <i>li</i> in Zhu’s cosmology manifests its connotation via the process of change, providing novel insights into the imagination of religion. For Adler, it is crucial to rethink <i>li</i> through retranslating the core notions in Zhu’s system, as such rethinking and retranslation inspire researchers to refine the meaning of philosophy. Overall, my paper highlights how Gardner, Ching, and Adler reconstruct, transform, and innovate knowledge through the spaces of their translation.</p>

Author's Biography

CHEN I-Hsin is Assistant Professor in the Department of Translation at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. She has published articles in various journals, including *Translation Studies*, *International Communication of Chinese Culture*, *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, and *Journal of Translation Studies*. She is currently working on a research project regarding the English translation of Zhu Xi's concept and study of *li* from the nineteenth century through the contemporary era. Her research interests include translation studies, Chinese studies, philosophy and religious studies, and cross-cultural communication.