

INTERPRETATION

- as work
- as class/anticolonialist struggle
- as movement-building

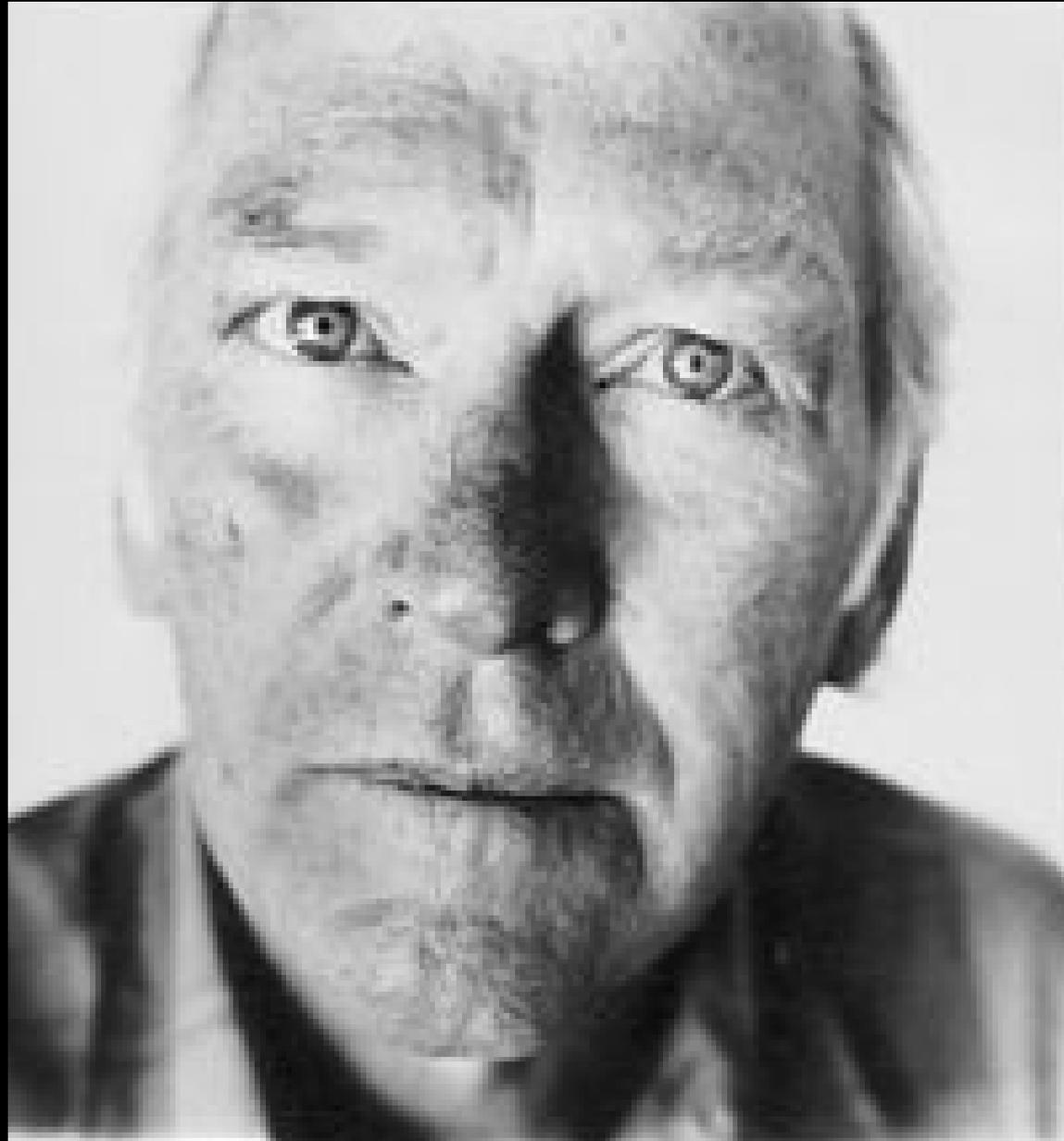
World Ecology Conference
Binghamton
July 2017

**1. Interpretation/
translation is at
the core of the
work that creates
capitalist value.**

Example: the constant, everyday work of “solving simultaneously for meaning and belief.”

(Translation/ interpretation [a power-laden political activity] is prior to word-meaning and belief.)

*Donald
Davidson*





*This everyday
labor has been
concealed through
the historical
fetishization/
reification of
“meanings” or
linguistic
equivalences:*

The “idea idea”.

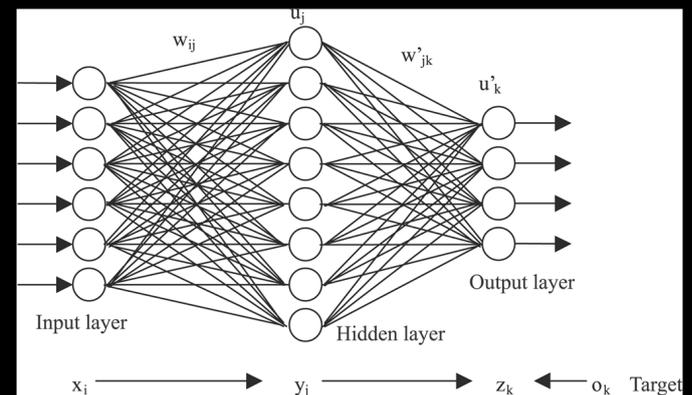
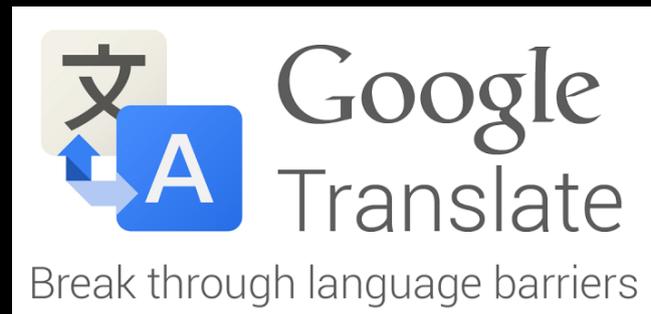
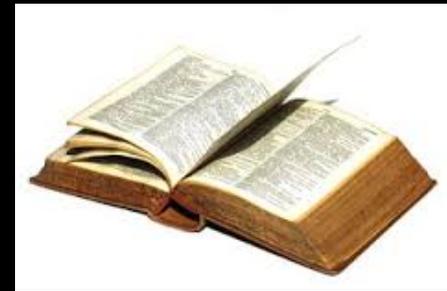
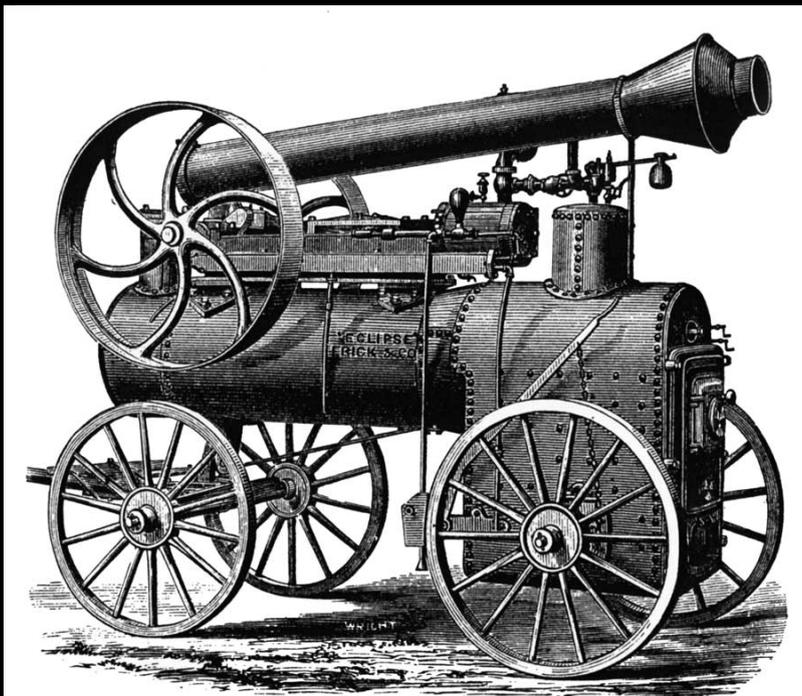
W. v. O. Quine



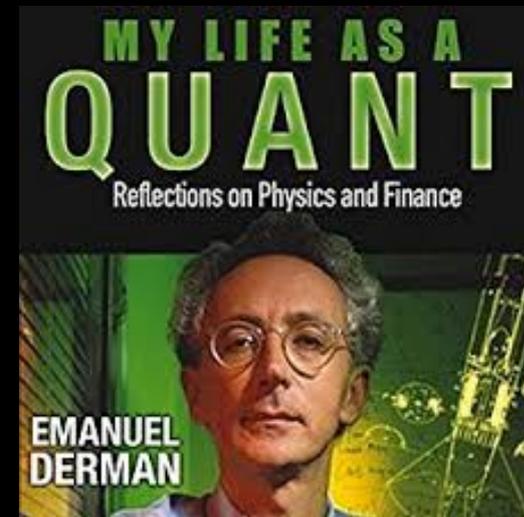
*What are the
specific “grounds
of equivalence” or
“wills to power”
through which this
fetishization
becomes possible?*

Lydia H. Liu

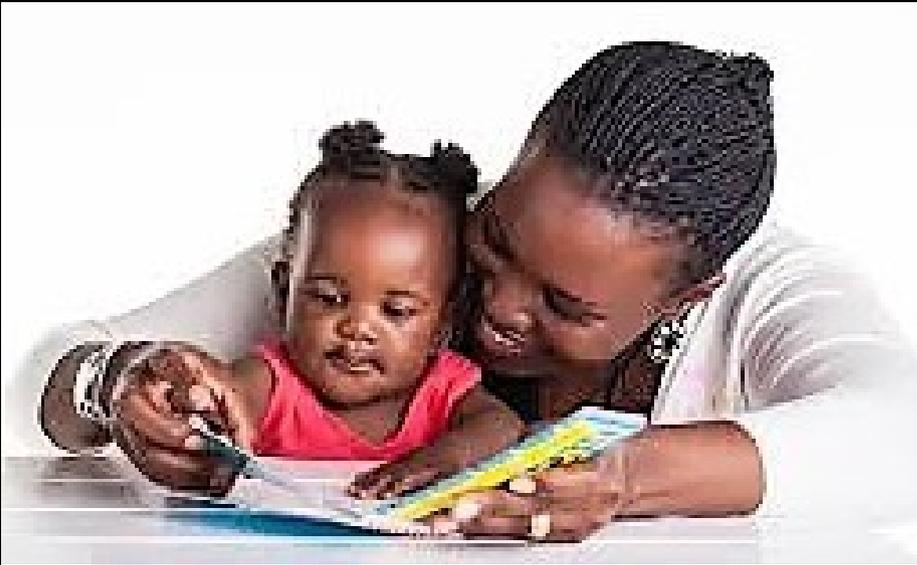
Mechanization/capitalization of interpretive work: increased “organic content” without new value being created (?)



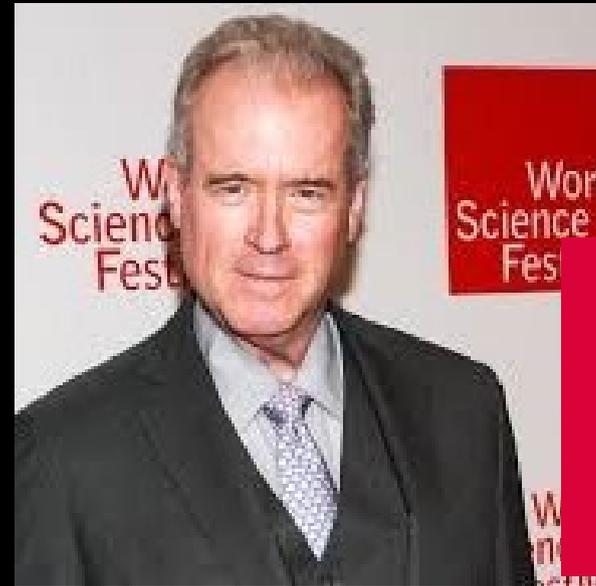
Valuation/devaluation of interpretive work ...



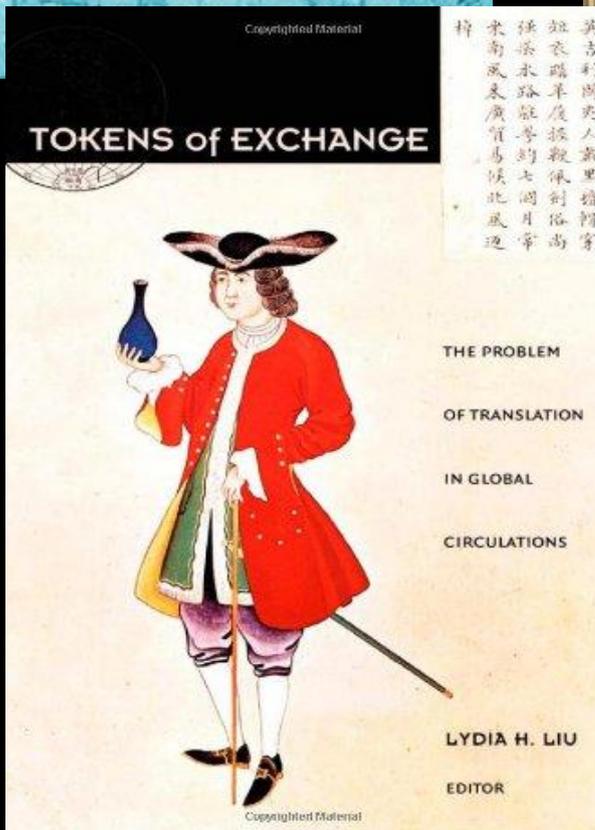
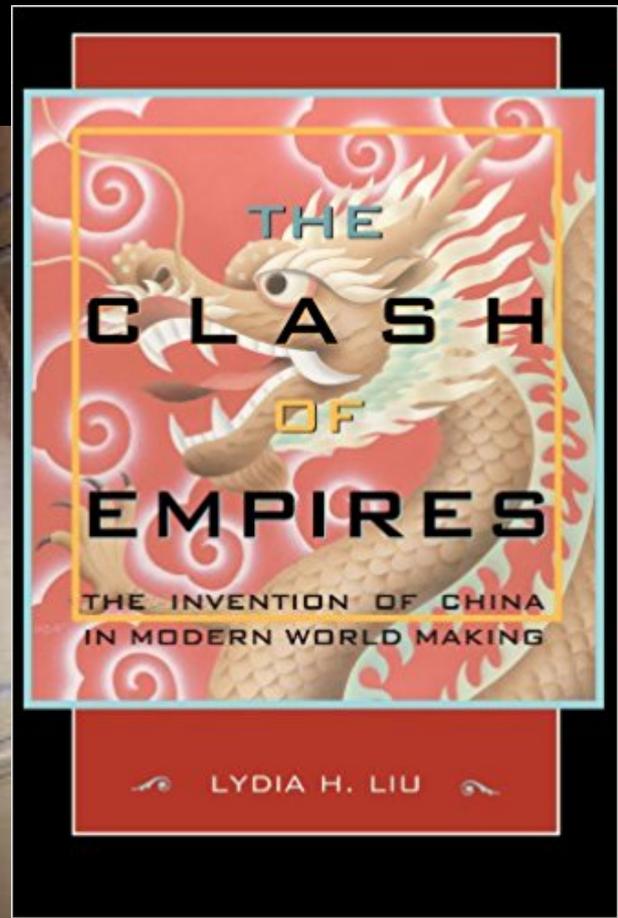
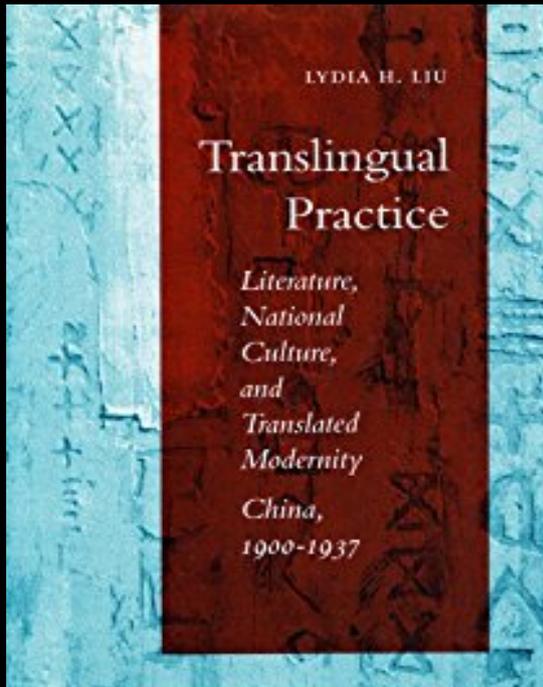
... and interpretive skills.



Footnote: mechanization of interpretive work at the hands of capital, sure ... but also of the state.



2. Interpretation/
translation is at
the core of class/
anticolonialist
struggle.



Lydia H. Liu

งาน

“ceremony/
party”

งานศพ

งานแต่งงาน

งานฉลองปีใหม่

“work”

งานจ้าง

แรงงาน

สหภาพแรงงาน

“energy”

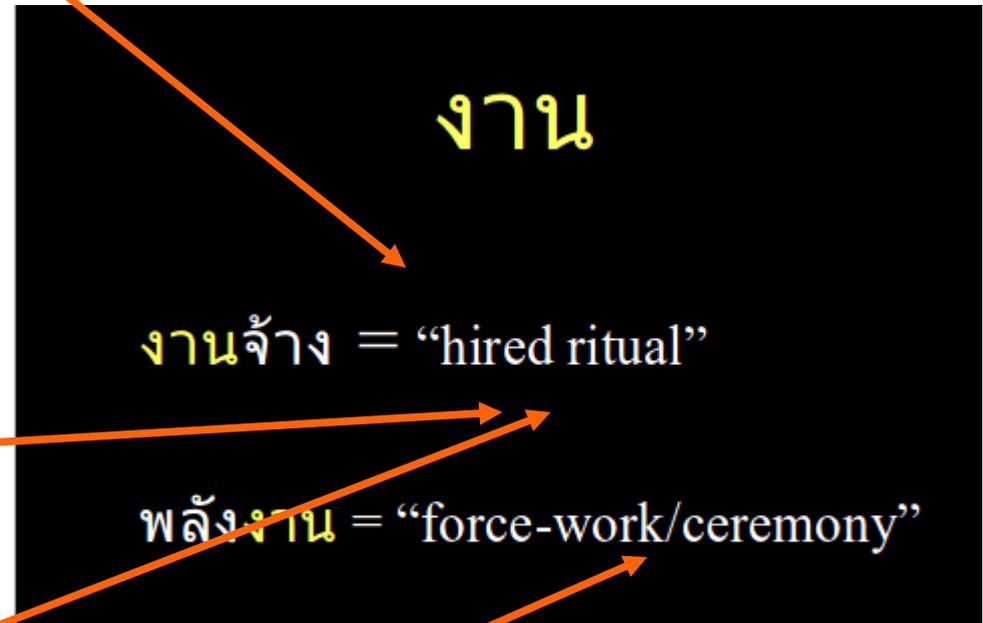
พลังงาน

Reverses polarity according to which wage labour is dominant: useful for historical understanding and popular mobilization around commons.

Distances, even satirizes abstract commodity labour (Ivan Illich).

Makes possible Thai cultural critique of the West.

Highlights connection between “energy” and abstract, accumulable labour that is lost in professional translations.



(All translations have a class basis and a class bias. Contrasting meanings and beliefs are enabled by different contexts of struggle.)



Routine refusals of
translation into e.g.
“development”.

Mama Juana

*Nabon, Azuay Province,
Ecuador*

3. Interpretation/
translation is at
the core of
movement-
building.

In particular, movement-building practice that is “slow”, non-professionalized and non-fetishistic about meaning.
“Anticapitalist” interpretive contexts.



“La traducción no es una técnica. La traducción es un trabajo dialógico y política.”

Boaventura de Sousa Santos

“It was always a problem to explain the commons within capitalist categories.”

E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (1990)



SOME EMERGING INTER-MOVEMENT TRANSLATION ISSUES

Commons $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *territorios*

Commoning $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *sumak kawsay*

World-ecology anti-Cartesianism $\leftarrow \rightarrow$
rights/subjecthood of nature

antiracism $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ plurinationality