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Scholars, Translators, Practitioners: What is our Role in Transmission?

with Willa Miller, Alex Berzin, Larry Mermelstein, Richard Barron, Karl Brunnhölzl, Christian Bernert

Willa Miller’s Presentation
Since Feeling is First
By E.E. Cummings

since feeling is first
who pays any attention
to the syntax of things
will never wholly kiss you;
wholly to be a fool
while Spring is in the world
my blood approves,
and kisses are a better fate than wisdom
lady I swear by all flowers. Don’t cry—the best gesture of my bring is less than
your eyelid’s flutter which says
we are for each other: then
laugh, leaning back in my arms

for life’s not a paragraph
And death I think is no parentheses.
Four “alt” dimensions of meaning
(for translation reflection)

I. Meaning is carried in the gaps (vs. content alone)

Silence plays the irreducible role of that that bears and haunts language, outside and against which alone language can emerge.

--Jacques Derrida
II. Meaning is contingent (vs. independent)

a. Meaning is contingent on intertextuality
b. Meaning is contingent on culture
c. Meaning is contingent on time (meanings evolve)
III. Meaning is experiential (vs. understood)

Analyses forget (which is only normal, since they are hermeneutics based on the exclusive search for the signified) the formidable underside of writing: bliss: Bliss, which can erupt across the centuries out of certain texts that were nonetheless written to the glory of the dreariest, of the most sinister philosophy.

--Roland Barthes, The Pleasure of the Text
IV. Meaning is Embodied (vs. solely cognitive)

Meaning is embodied. It arises through embodied organism-environment interactions in which significant patterns are marked within the flow of experience... Meaning involves the blending of the conceptual, structural, and formal dimension on the one hand and the pre-conceptual, non-formal, felt dimensions on the other. Meaning resides in neither of these dimensions of experience alone, but only in their ongoing connectedness and inter-animation.

--Mark Johnson (Philosopher, University of Chicago)

The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding
Offering Prayer of the Three Gestures (from *Karma Kam tshang Chod*)

Every single form that appears
In all the worlds of the universe
I offer as the gesture of sacred Body.
Grant us the power of eternal Form.

Every single sound that is heard
In all the worlds of the universe
I offer as the gesture of sacred Speech.
Grant us the power of infinite Speech.

Every single thought in the minds
In all the worlds of the universe
I offer as the gesture of sacred Mind.
Grant us the power of wisdom Mind.

All of the pain and happiness
In all the worlds of the universe
I offer as the eight auspicious signs.
If there's joy, I'll give it all away.
If there's pain, I'll gladly take the load.
May joy spread throughout the entire world.
May the world’s well of pain run dry.