

Meaning-Less or More

by clancy *Sunday, Sep 2 2018, 4:18am*

international / prose / post

an intriguing word as all successful communication depends on meaning and the signs and symbols that transport/transmit culturally learned meaning/s.

it becomes fairly obvious that 'meaning' is a learned process in that we learn to associate certain signs, symbols and actions with specific meanings; for instance, in Australian culture and upraised thumb, is a derogatory sign, it sort of translates as 'up your arse,' or 'get fucked' in the negative sense; whereas in America an upraised thumb is a sign of victory or success, the index finger is used in America to transmit what an upraised thumb 'was' in Oz, tho the American media has altered Australian culture, the index finger now replacing the message of an upraised thumb, bear with it, i am merely emphasising that meaning is learned and is culture specific

the learning process is intense in youth but continues through old age tho the elderly are often mocked by youth that have new meanings associated with various signs, symbols producing new values to communicate their intentions; indeed, there is no escaping culture as responsible for meaning, so why is there so much confusion regarding intended meaning in communication?

personal experience, bias and subjectivity are most often blamed for faulty communication, hence various professions utilise jargon, as for initiates jargon is far clearer than the utilisation of common words, nevertheless jargon is language a sort of slang, which is a far more efficient means of communication than common language.

however, ALL language breaks down when attempts are made to transmit profound, abstract and intuitive based meanings; words fail and the devices of poetics are resorted to, allusion, analogy, metaphor, simile etc, which is why poetry is felt while it is read, poets use language to reach beyond language into other sentient realms -- now it should be noted that while poetry has more success in 'moving' or 'resonating' with readers it also depends to a large degree on Subjectivity, as no fixed meaning in transmission is attempted, readers are left to interpret what they read, which makes poetry of all ages, a post-modernist art form, poetry is therefore liberating in many respects while common language imprisons and attempts to fix.

now consider that culturally inculcated meaning becomes an automatic interpretive process, making subjects slaves to language, which is why advertising and marketing strategies are successful, as the automatic process is utilised to force interpreters to do what they otherwise may not do, consider your shopping habits and how you select branded items, via superimposed, unconsciously learned, preferences.

today arguments regarding freedom, free will and liberty proliferate, as clearly language, including abstract signs and emotive symbols, are utilised to enslave entire populations. The open ended political slogan is a good example of how intended meanings, usually designed to capture, are utilised by marketers, PR and advertising consultants to allow readers/interpreters to fill in the blanks with their own biases and hopes, for example the now infamous, unqualified phrase, "light at the end of the tunnel," which was utilised to prolong the senseless, mass murdering, Vietnam war.

nevertheless, we all have resistant mechanisms, which are Subjectivity and personal Bias, it is our own distorted (subjective) interpretations that either help to enslave or liberate us.

So the next time someone accuses you of subjectivity say, thank you! Without it we would all be automatons today.

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