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Abstract
One language's logic is often another one's illogicality...

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one language’s logic is often another one’s illogicality
how so, you ask, ah, there are instances in which
we just can’t speak to each other without you intervening or
interpreting even though an interpreter is often looked down on
as no more than a dealer in words
exactly where you now stand: let’s begin with parallel bars
which in her eyes is but double bars
for where you approach things geometrically
she accesses it mathematically
and when you cite uneven bars she may simply say:
        oh, we call it high and low bars
that sounds almost as if she looked at it with an artist’s eye
before a canvas whereas you looked at it sidewise, with a road-builder’s
for what is uneven anyway, she wonders, when it comes to bars
there are other minor differences, too
he puts east first whenever he says east south west north
by contrast you begin with north when you say north south east west
it’s almost as if there’s a linguistic geography in which peoples are
conditioned by their localities & certain ones from the north must
        necessarily
belittle those from the south as you go up north and come down south
placing at one strike the one above the other
but then, she says, hang on, why don’t they begin with west
these people who call themselves westerners, thus self-imposingly
        superior
that gets you and you kind of go: wow, i don’t really know
setting off a roll of laughter from the rostrum to the back of the seats
if we put him and her together in an imaginary union
there will be interesting consequences for when she goes up the country
he’ll say: i’m going down to the country, and when she says, should the
        union
dissolve one day as all unions do naturally after a period of time with the wear and tear of love: i’ll have this matter brought before the court he’ll respond in his logical manner by replying: oh yes, i’ll definitely go up to the court for i’m not afraid that the sky might fall down which, in her common sense, would be equivalent to saying: i know the sky won’t fall in, and, most frustrating of all, it is this highest state of morality that he would struggle to convey to her: that of being I-less, for she would have none of that. why, she cries, if i remain I-less, i would descend to the lowest of the low, not only without the i but also without the eye, worse, the ai, which, in his most il/logical language means love

OUYANG YU has published forty-three books, including a minority of self-published titles. His forthcoming collection of poetry is The Kingsbury Tales: A Novel, to be shortly released by Brandl & Schlesinger. For more information, please visit: www.ouyangyu.com.au