



Over dinner I made an attempt to share some ideas and concerns. This was my first formal meeting with the Institute. “I have concerns about how things gain significance”, I began.

When looking through the menu I arrived at the Chinese character signifying foot. What the mouth above what look to be toes was for, I wasn't sure, but there was something intriguing about it, appetising, even.

“So to me it is a question of negotiating the meaning and value of things”, I continued avidly. Since the words and the dishes, for the most part, have no discernable relationship of signification, the Institute did the ordering.

Soon the first dishes arrived, displaying various characteristics; to me heating a cucumber was quite unusual. “I want to go somewhere (faraway) to isolate a series of features to form a system.” This idea I learned about from a friend and now I wanted to try it out, to bring it into my own life, so to speak.

More unlikely dishes were introduced, far outnumbering us. “So are these Chinese features?” the Institute wanted to know. “No, to me China is a matter of indifference, merely providing a reserve of features all a part of a symbolic order, one altogether detached from my own.”

A pungent condiment made my tongue numb, which quite clearly affected my ability to articulate sounds. “I am in no way claiming to represent reality, rather I want to add reality to things by employing these features.” “Or put another way, these features should make me relate better to the things I encounter.”

I mistook Song Yi's drink for a shared dish and dug my spoon into it. “Most importantly, this system of features should afford me a situation of writing, a situation of thinking. And later if possible a situation of affect and pleasure”, I said while eating a bit more of his drink.