

RADICAL INTERPRETATION AS MOVEMENT-BUILDING

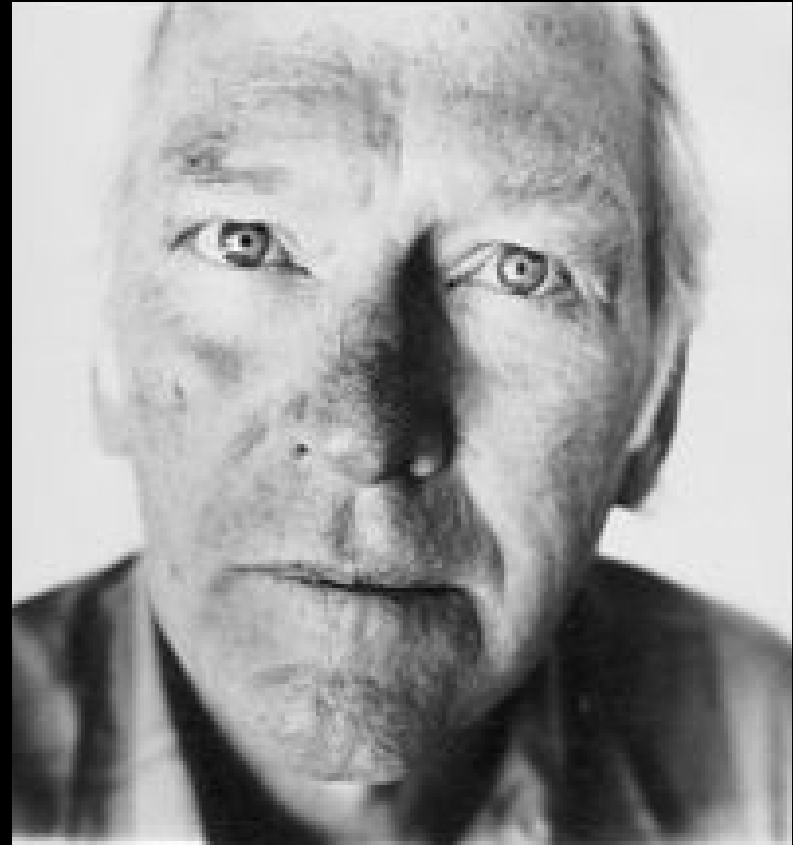
ISEE

East Anglia

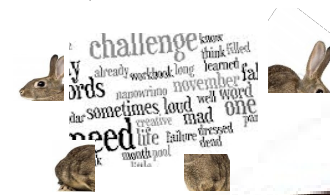
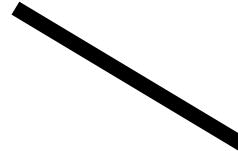
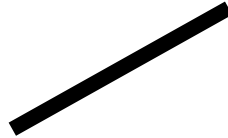
June 2013



W. v. O. Quine



Donald Davidson



dreamstime





“How much grotesqueness may we allow to the native's beliefs ... in order to avoid how much grotesqueness in his grammar or semantics?”

งาน

“ceremony/
party”

งานศพ

งานแต่งงาน

งานฉลองปีใหม่

“work”

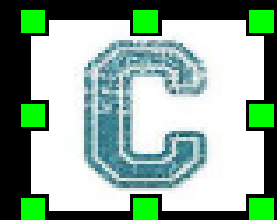
งานจ้าง

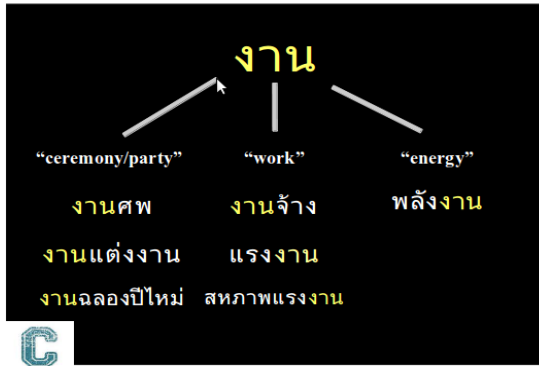
แรงงาน

สหภาพแรงงาน

“energy”

พลังงาน



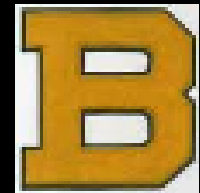


งาน

งานศพ = “corpse work”

งานจ้าง = “hired ritual”

พลังงาน = “force work/ceremony”



งาน

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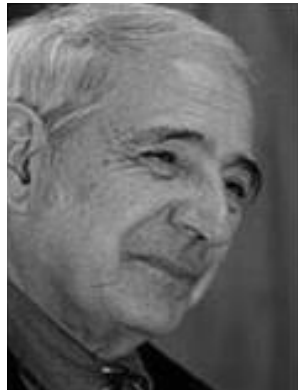
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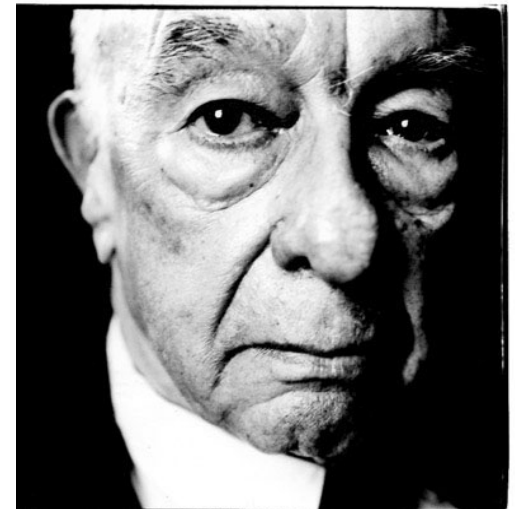




Outrage! You can't say that one translation is just as good as another! There has to be one correct meaning!



Sure, we tend to agree. But you don't need to fetishize 'meaning' or 'belief' – or to privilege first-person claims – to get agreement. All you need are normal circumstances and rules of thumb.





"You can't allow contradictory translations!"

"Sure, but you do need to fetishize 'meaning' or 'belief' — or privilege first-person claims — to avoid chaos. All you need are normal circumstances and rules of thumb."



... but are “normal circumstances” all we should be concerned with? Does everybody always want the “professional” translation?



For example, can you think of circumstances in which the “Banal”, awkward translation of งาน is not socially disruptive but rather enabling? Where you want an unprofessional translation?

งาน

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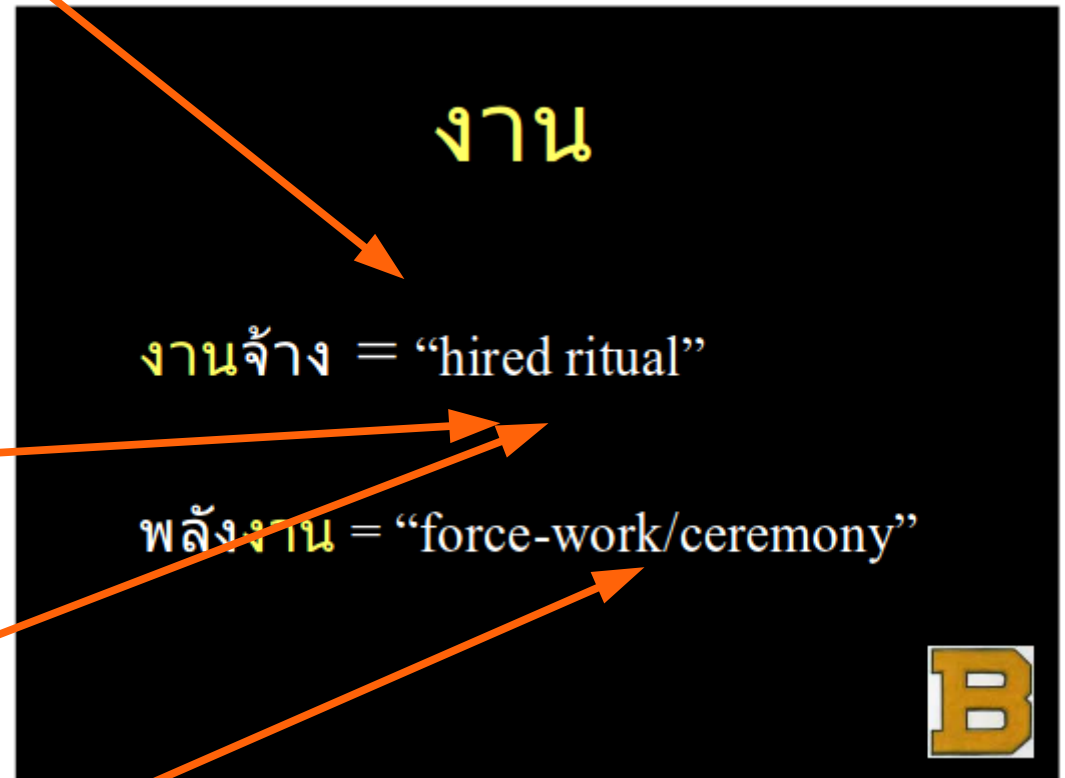


Reverses polarity according to which wage labour is dominant: useful for historical understanding and popular mobilization around commons.

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.)



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

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





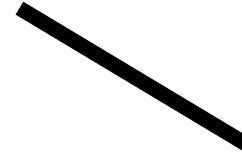
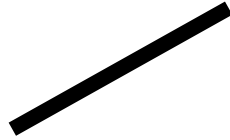
E.g., neither the conscientious historian nor most global defenders of land, forests and water will flourish in translation processes that result in meanings such as:

Commons = scarce natural resources

Q. But how can such translation processes be made possible?

Respecting the indeterminacy highlighted by Quine's theatre of translation

→ distancing it and recontextualizing it.



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C

B



C

B



C

B



C

B



Ministry of
TRUTH

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH





*“panegyric on
absolute
government”*

“crimethink”

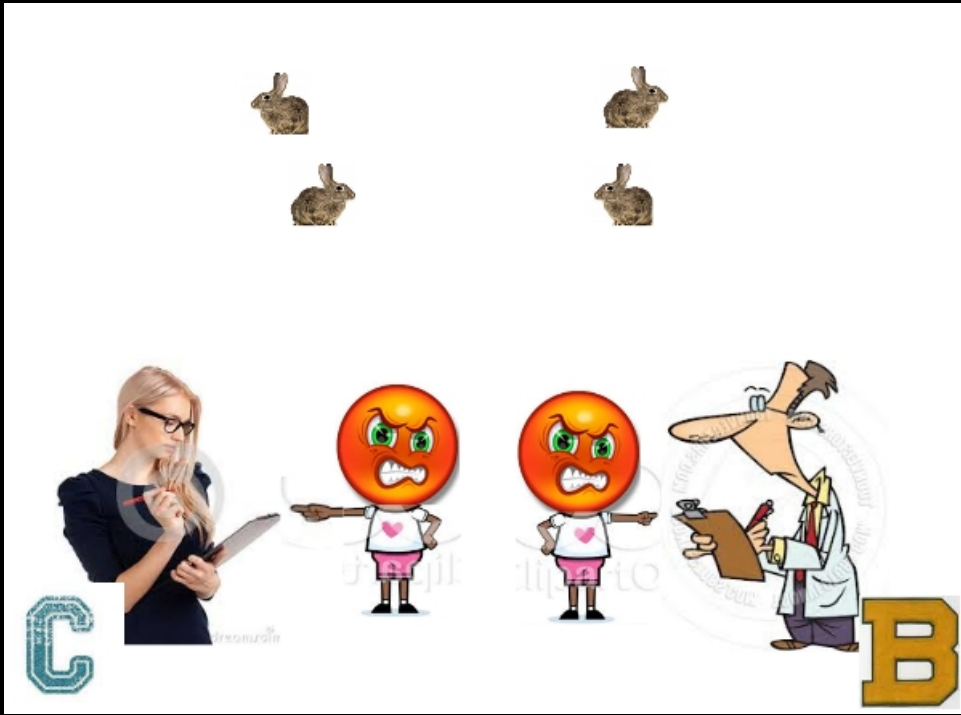


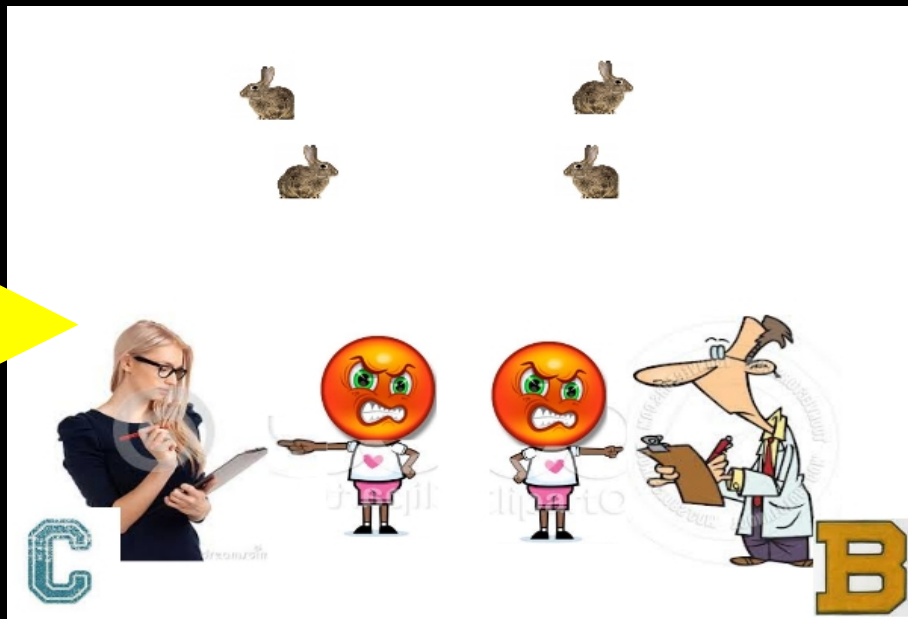
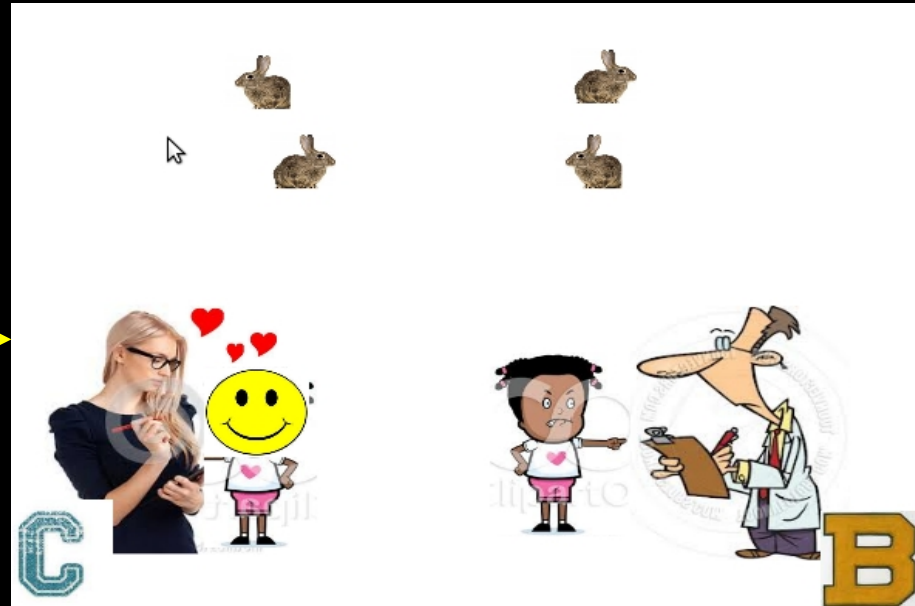
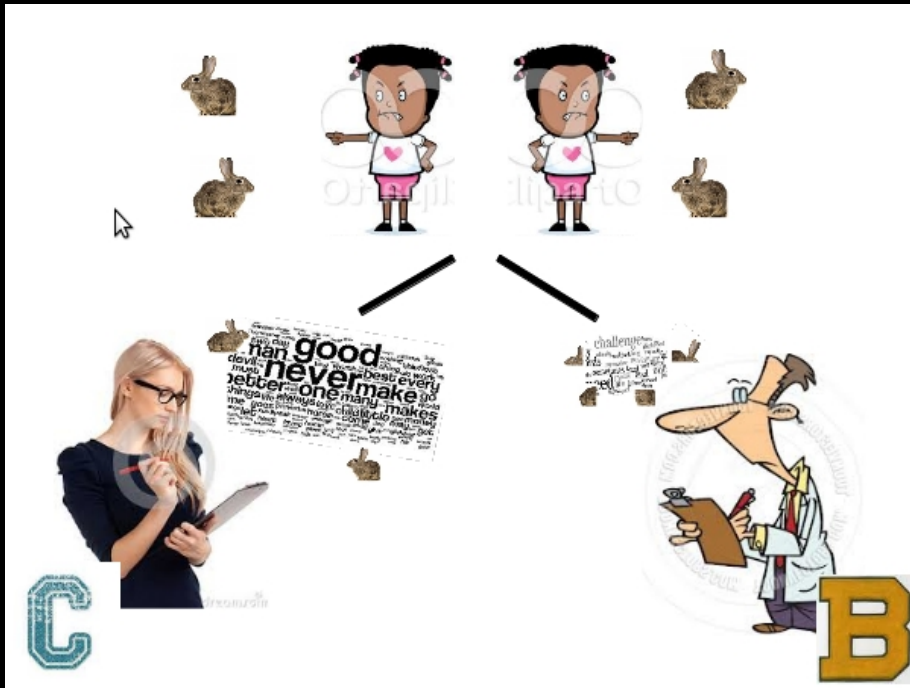
C

B

I Never Said That!









*Ecuador
2000s*





2008

Buen vivir
Rights of nature
Plurinationality



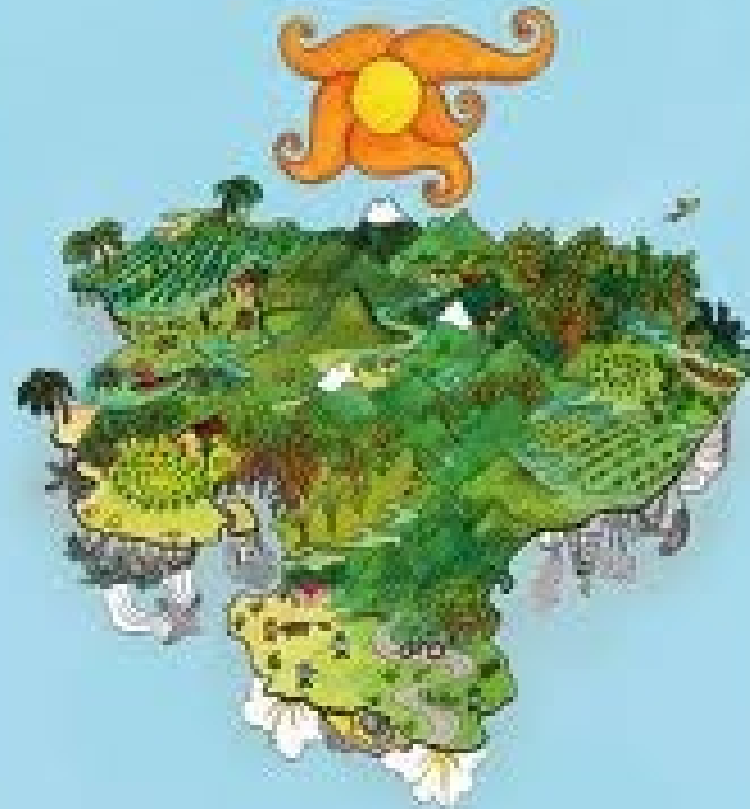
BUEN VIVIR / VIVIR BIEN

La Alternativa de los Pueblos



**Sumak Kawsay o
Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir**

¿Cómo vivir mejor en el Ecuador?



**Acción Ecológica
2012**







VS.



Buen vivir

*“economic
development”*

“crimethink”



Rights of nature

“Protected areas”/“responsible extraction”/“the wild”

“crimethink”



dreamstime.com



Pluri- nationality

*Averaged,
abstract “general
interest”*

“crimethink”





“Enough of childish ideas of saying no to oil or mining. The challenge is to live well without losing one's identity, but keeping one's identity does not mean continuing to be miserable. We cannot be like beggars sitting on a bag of gold ... the worst racism is to pretend misery to be a part of one's culture.”

Rafael Correa



“It is not possible to breach our rights and rights of nature. We don't think Ecuador can develop as a country if to accomplish some rights it is necessary to breach others. We cannot negotiate our principle of plurinationality, which is not a conflict between indigenous peoples and government, but is a conflict as society.”

Humberto Chalongo

