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Reviewed work:

*Mediating Ideology in Text and Image: Ten Critical Studies*. (2006). Inger Lassen, Jeanne Strunck, & Torben Vestergaard (Eds.). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. Pp. 254. ISBN 902722708X. \$ 144.00 (Europe EURO 120.00)

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This book should be of great interest to teachers of both critical reading and critical literacy. For the classroom teacher, a book like this (which foregrounds the word *ideology* in the title) opens up the whole question of criticality, and of what kinds of criticality are acceptable in educational settings. However, the book under review also offers teachers of critical reading and of critical literacy a wide range of analytic tools that can be used in the classroom with advanced readers. The different authors demonstrate how these tools can be applied to a diverse range of multimodal texts from different media contexts, and they reveal a wide range of communicative strategies that can be (and are) used by producers of multimodal texts for more or less wholesome ends.

### Relevance

It is widely accepted that advanced readers of English as a foreign language (EFL) and of English as a second language (ESL) need critical reading skills, especially students who are preparing for tertiary level study in traditional Anglo-western institutions. Wilson, Devereux, Macken-Horarik, and Trimmingham-Jack (2004) put it this way:

One of the central skills in learning to ‘turn knowledge into wisdom’ is critical reading: the ability to learn from text, to think analytically and critically and to develop an ethical and reasoned position as a result. (p. 1)

However, the precise nature of critical reading is contested and may indeed be expected to vary from one context to another (Kramer-Dahl, 2001). It is a concept that was already familiar to the father of critical pedagogy Paulo Freire (see Hull, 2003). English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has traditionally set out to teach critical reading skills to a high level, but it is necessary here to distinguish critical reading from critical literacy (and critical language awareness). Many EAP textbooks incorporate critical reading skills, which are in fact closely allied to analytical reading skills (see, e.g., Swales & Feak, 2004, especially pp. 197-204; Glendinning & Holmström, 2004; McWhorter, 2006). Critical literacy, however, is related to Critical EAP (Benesch, 1993, 2001) on the one hand and Critical Pedagogy (Canagarajah, 1999) on the other, and has *emancipatory* goals. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is the analytic tradition espoused in one form or another by all the authors of the book under review (and which had its origins in the 1980s in the work of Norman Fairclough), has fed into both the aforementioned streams.

Complaints are frequently voiced nowadays to the effect that the critical skills taught in EAP programs may work well in the EAP classroom but are quite inadequate in terms of preparing students to survive in an authentic academic environment. Boz (2005, p. 1) uses the powerful image of “a ‘wall’ that students may hit when they enter their chosen discipline, after leaving the protective environment of the EAP course.” By this she is referring to what Hyland (2004, p. 159) called “the ideological power of academic discourses.” Boz writes of the *political* struggle for identity that awaits many students from language backgrounds other than English who find that they consciously or unconsciously *resist* the discourses made available to them by the academy (see Ivanič, 1998, Lillis, 1999).

Teachers who want to break through this wall (or “destroy” it, like Boz) and to equip students with the kind of metaknowledge about discourses, discursive conflict, and interdiscursivity needed to negotiate a working relationship with the academy will benefit from reading this book, where all of the aforementioned issues and concepts are both discussed and applied. They will, however, have to be prepared to take on board some challenging concepts (semiosis, intertextuality, recontextualization, discourse as a countable noun, and of course interdiscursivity; see Wodak’s “Foreword” for an overview), as well as the premise that ideologies are so thoroughly *naturalized* in the genres and the play of texts, forms and images of everyday communication that, until the discourse analyst *de-naturalizes* them, they remain invisible to those most affected. Research of the kind exemplified in this book can, however, inform teaching (especially the teaching of reading to advanced level students), and the analytic techniques can open up to a clear-headed examination many currents in our multimodal environment that often carry EFL and ESL students in particular into deep psychological water.

Wallace (2003) has recently argued that critical reading has important payoffs in terms of foreign language learning, in two particular ways. First, the extended discussion of texts “allows students to draw more fully on their existing linguistic resources and to stretch them at the same time” (p. 199); and, second, improved grammatical accuracy is a likely outcome as students search for clarity and precision. This approach to critical reading is aligned with that illustrated in Swales and Feak (2004, see above), and can be referred to as *downward-looking criticality*. Teachers are often less comfortable teaching *upward criticality*, where individuals (i.e., students) are encouraged to question the institutional frameworks of their classroom and their lives. Boz

(2005), like Benesch (1993, 2001), Lillis (1999), and Canagarajah (1999, 2001, 2002) would argue that this is precisely what is needed in this post-industrial era.

In fact, high school curricula in subject English in English-speaking countries like Australia regularly set objectives that entail a high degree of upward criticality, standards that apply to ESL students as well as native speakers of English. The descriptors for the highest levels of achievement (Grade A) in the area progressively entitled “reading and viewing,” according to the Board of Studies New South Wales (2005, p. 2), are as follows:

through close and wide study, responds to a comprehensive range of demanding, imaginative, factual and critical texts.	perceptively investigates the context and perspective of texts and the relationships between and among them.	constructively and critically analyses and evaluates complex texts by selecting, describing and explaining significant language forms and features and structures of those texts.	responds imaginatively and critically in a highly effective way to verbal and visual imagery.
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Harwood and Hadley (2004) have suggested a compromise between downward and upward criticality. They contrast what they call a “pragmatic” approach to EAP with “critical” approaches. The pragmatic approach focuses on equipping students with basic skills they will need to survive in the academy. The authors write that taking a critical approach to EAP is to recognize that academic discourse practices “are socially constructed and therefore open to contestation and change by the learners” (p. 375); and, moreover, that “Critical EAP constitutes problematizing as fundamental to pedagogy in general and EAP in particular” (p. 357) (referring here to Pennycook, 1999). Harwood and Hadley describe their own approach as follows:

*Critical Pragmatic EAP* attempts to reconcile these seemingly irreconcilable approaches. On the one hand, it acknowledges that students should be exposed to dominant discourse norms, in line with Pragmatic EAP; while on the other hand, like Critical EAP, it stresses that students have choices and should be free to adopt or subvert the dominant practices as they wish. Critical Pragmatic EAP therefore has two objectives: “to help students perform well in their academic courses while encouraging them to question and shape the education they are being offered” (Benesch, 2001, p. xvii). (2004, p. 357)

For those willing to make the effort, *Mediating Ideology* suggests numerous ways in which an innovative teacher could introduce a culture of questioning into the reading classroom and equip students with advanced critical literacy skills, in terms of linguistic categories and analytic techniques that are based on the latest research in this field.

## Summary and Critique

Part I, “Media constructions of meaning: Rhetorical strategies and intersubjective positioning,” contains five papers which illustrate five different approaches to the critical analysis of

discourse. In order to demonstrate different rhetorical strategies, the individual authors in this section provide a number of fascinating multimodal case studies.

In the lead paper “Semiosis, ideology and mediation: A dialectical view,” Norman Fairclough presents a new version of Critical Discourse Analysis and effectively redefines the term *discourse*. The term *semiosis* in the title of his piece is meant to capture the multimodal nature of meaning-making in media texts. Theoretical excursions aside, Fairclough very perceptively analyses two discursive practices, realized and mediated by public texts, recorded on a recent visit to Romania. He describes how new semiotic resources have been recontextualized and transformed, first in an advertising leaflet that adopts the Western construct of “club membership” and its attached “privileges” and, second, on a sign in a bank about the need to respect the privacy of other clients who may be ahead in the queue (this is a social setting where both queuing and privacy are relatively new concepts). Fairclough explains how these semiotic resources have been “appropriated within the specific social and power relationships and social dynamics of Romanian society” (p. 30) and are used in effect to shore up the privileged status (as well as the sense of privilege) of the new economic and social elite in that country. In the final pages of this paper Fairclough reemphasizes the Foucauldian concept of a discourse as an ideology lying *behind* the practices that enact it—a discourse that is *immanent* in chains of events and social practices even when not actualized in the form of texts.

In the second paper in Part I (“Evaluative semantics and ideological positioning in journalistic discourse: A new framework for analysis”), Peter White introduces another new analytic approach, the appraisal framework, which is rapidly being adopted by exponents of systemic functional grammar (see Hood, 2004; Martin & Rose, 2003; White, 2001, 2003). This framework has allowed analysts to operationalize notions like stance and evaluation, and allows us to identify the systems of value and belief that the discourses of the media often render so natural as to be invisible—and thereby reproduce them. White shows how readers of seemingly objective news items can be led subtly to adopt particular value positions by means of rhetorical strategies. He explores implicit evaluative strategies through which supposedly *objective* news reports *naturalize* ideological positions (this is a theme that is also reflected in Inger Lassen’s paper). If I have one complaint about this paper, it is simply the compressed nature of White’s introduction to what for some readers will be a wholly new framework.

Pentti Haddington (“Identity and stance taking in news interviews: A case study”) examines how co-participants in televised news interviews use membership categories as a resource for stance taking and for the negotiation of stances and identities. She uses a method that combines conversation analysis (CA) with the theory of stance. She takes two examples from *Crossfire* (CNN), and shows how identity work is evident in the interlocutors’ actions and turn-taking. And she shows how ethnic identities of non-present parties are constituted and negotiated in a particular episode of *Crossfire*.

The editor, Inger Lassen (“De-naturalizing ideology: Presupposition and appraisal in biotechnology press releases”), presents a fine-grained linguistic analysis of a set of texts dealing with the same issue from opposing viewpoints. The issue is the introduction of genetically engineered golden rice. Lassen uses the two communicative resources of presupposition and appraisal (engagement) to analyze the rhetorical strategies used in ten biotechnology press

releases, and shows how both proponents and opponents use the aforementioned resources to promote different ideological positions. (In overtly and covertly persuasive texts, information can be presented, strategically, as being *presupposed*; that is, it is presented as a shared assumption by means of restrictive relative clauses, certain types of verbs, and genitive constructions.)

Finally, in Part I, Francesco Caviglia (“Understanding public discourse about violence and crime”) presents a challenge for critical discourse analysis in educational settings (in this case, in Italy). He analyzes press representations of a crime involving immigrants “of Slavic or Albanian origin” (p. 122) and explains biases in media accounts and the construction of the deviant as *other* in terms of two deep oppositional metaphors which, according to Lakoff (1996, 2002), lie at the heart of *left-right* liberal-conservative discourses (qua ideologies) in liberal democracies: the Strict Father and the Nurturing Father. Caviglia discusses the role of CDA in education, albeit somewhat briefly, and the necessity of balancing analyses of biased texts with examples of “good discursive practice” (p. 121).

In Part II (“Resemiotized meaning: Analyzing images and ideologies”) there are five case studies in which the writers apply a range of analytical tools to a variety of multimodal texts.

Anders Horsbøl’s main interest lies in analyzing the interplay of meanings encoded in verbal texts, illustrations and graphic form in multimodal texts. He describes what he terms “multimodal shifts” and “the co-articulation of verbal and visual elements” in political advertisements and compares the changing norms of political discourse in Denmark. Focusing on newspaper advertisements from the 1987 and 2005 election campaigns, he examines both the way that policies are represented (i.e., the content) and the way political relations identities are constructed. Personally, I found his analysis of the different discourses of the verbal texts particularly insightful. His discussion of the semiotics of personal and especially facial images in political advertisements leads nicely into the chapter by Judith Cross.

Judith Cross (“Icons as ideology: A media construction”) analyzes the uses of female *icons* in the mass media, focusing on a hitherto unexplored dimension of visual images—*in-and-out* or background-and-foreground directionality, which functions alternatively to bring near or to distance (portions of) the image represented vis-à-vis the viewer. Cross notes that representations of celebrities in the media can have indexical as well as iconic properties, and constitute “a genre which embodies ideologies capable of stirring strong and lasting responses” (p. 174). Such images often play an important role in forming identities and value systems of young people, or in building resistance or even antagonisms to certain identities and value systems. Audiences, says Cross, typically “consume images unawares” (p. 190). In her analysis, “[t]he reproduction of images idolizing women reflect, represent and reveal [sic] the paradox inherent in the valuing and devaluing of the female to postmodern Western society” (p. 185).

Henrik Rahm (“Getting attention in the media: Interdiscursivity and ideology in advertisements”) shows how advertisements in the form of direct mail-outs (a brochure for skin care products) and newspaper supplements (trade union advertorials) draw upon the discourses of education and science to produce *hybrid* documents. In fact, he makes the claim that advertisements are normally hybridized in this way. When different discourses are interwoven in this manner

(usually for strategic purposes), we can speak of interdiscursivity. This clear analysis applies widely in the multimodal realm of advertising.

Dorothy Economou explains how the lead pictures in a front-page news story interact with the verbiage of the headlines to create subliminal effects for readers or viewers. She compares norms in Australian and Greek newspapers for the reportage of the illegal entry of foreign nationals to the two countries. Like White, she uses Kress and van Leeuwen's image analysis framework (1996) along with the new appraisal framework introduced by White in an earlier chapter. I found her account of the way images are chosen in accordance with assumptions about the prior political stance of the readership to be of particular interest.

Finally, Konstantinos Kostoudis explores the use of superimposed captions in TV news bulletins in Greece as "ideological indices." This is not a form of multimodality that most readers will be familiar with. Kostoudis demonstrates the use of intertextual allusions to construct ideological meanings and shows how metaphorical structures encoded in the captions are used to preempt interpretation by predisposing viewers to choose certain meanings over others. This chapter affords a fascinating glimpse into an unusual use of intertextuality and how it can be exploited for strategic and ideological purposes.

At the end of the book there is a subject index which is possibly a bit short for a book of this length (just over three pages). Also, one might have wished for an index of authors. The book is impeccably produced and free from typographical errors.

This may not be quite "[t]he first book which systematically brings together critical discourse analysis and multimodality," as the blurb on the back cover claims (the editor contradicts the claim on page ix). However, it is a very valuable collection that is representative of the best work being carried out in CDA—by very well-known authors (like Fairclough and White), by established scholars, and by relatively new players in this exciting field. I hope it will give teachers insights into CDA and encourage them to use concepts like presupposition and appraisal, evaluation and stance, discourses and interdiscursivity, in the classroom, in order to help more advanced students to "read between the lines," to decode the icons of popular (and unpopular) culture, and to grapple with the covert forces at work both in the mass media and the classroom, forces that all too readily construct ready-made and possibly unwanted identities and philosophical positions for readers and viewers who are unwary and/or unaware.

As noted above, *Mediating Ideology* is not an easy book for those unfamiliar with CDA. Readers in quest of a more detailed exposition of the analytic frameworks mentioned in this book are advised to consult Fairclough (1992) for CDA, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) for more details on the grammar of images, and White (2001, 2003) or Martin and Rose (2003) for a fuller exposition of the appraisal theory.

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