

Call for Papers

Special Issue: Discursive practice and the role of ideology: Discourse studies meets critical theory

Special Issue for Journal of Multicultural Discourses (JMD):

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In discourse studies, discourse is usually understood as the use of texts in various sorts of contexts (situational, historical, structural, institutional). From these practices of meaning production, different aspects of the social such as identities, beliefs, attitudes, institutions, social structures and new text production emerge. Despite this broad notion of discourse, the notion of ideology is often understood as sets of collective beliefs or mental representations.

In contrast to such approaches, which see ideology as immaterial beliefs, in the last decade we observe a return of ideology critique in social and political philosophy, sociology and cultural studies. These interventions are considering specifically the *material* and *practical* dimensions of ideologies. Ideologies are seen therefore less as set of beliefs and representations but as practices related to an unsustainable social order and dominating power relations. Even if critical theory and discourse analysis have pointed to the crucial role of ideological aspects, both tendencies need deeper exchange and discussions on the role of ideology, discourse and materiality.

Our understanding of ideology tries to bring together the analysis of society, understood as exploitive social order, with the analysis of practices that systematically reproduce this social order. Ideologies emerge from special contextualities as long as they relate texts to particular contexts, namely inequalities, exclusions and power structures. They contribute the reproduction of social order and ideological relations are at work in social struggles of change over hegemonic constellations as well.

In this special issue we want to bring together critical discourse studies and critical theory in order to focus on the ideological dimensions of power, domination, inequality and injustices that are related to discourse production. In particular, the contributions of this special issue reflect on the material conditions of discourse productions. The authors will elaborate how language is related to the formation of hierarchies in discourses on gender, race and social class. We will furthermore elaborate how subject positions and subjectivities are formed by discourses in an unequal socio-material space, and we will reflect on the ideological role in these processes. A third group of contributions will discuss the relationship between ideology and critique.

The research papers may include the following topics:

- Update the notion of ideology and ideology critique bringing together social and political philosophy with discourse studies.
- Articulate critical procedures to understand the complexity of ideology.
- Discussion of the cultural nature and cultural diversity of ideology.
- Focus specifically on the material conditions and practical effects of ideology.
- Analyze the specific roles and functions of the ideological in different discourse setting.

The editors:

The editors are founding members of the international and interdisciplinary research group Discourse, Ideology and Political Economy (DIPE). Together they edited a special issue of Critical Discourse Studies on Marx and Discourse Studies and organized several winterschools and other academic events.

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Cultural Discourse Studies through the Journal of Multicultural Discourses: 10 years on

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EDITORIAL

Cultural Discourse Studies through the *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*: 10 years on

The year of 2015 marks the 10th anniversary of the *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* (*JMD*). As founding Editor-in-Chief, I have first the publisher Multilingual Matters to acknowledge and to thank, whose management was courageous enough to invest on my 'start-up' initiative, and then I must express gratitude to the present publisher, the Taylor & Francis Group, who was visionary enough to re-acquire the journal in 2008 and to sustain and foster its growth. I would like also to express deep appreciation to the editorial board members (past and present), authors, reviewers, as well as readers, who have, over the years, supported, nurtured and elevated this academic publication. Without their entrepreneurship, friendship and scholarship, it would not have been possible for this international channel and platform to come into being – in this sense, one might say, the field of communication and discourse studies would not be what it is today.

In this commemorative editorial, what I would like to do is to look back and forth over the body of scholarship that *JMD* has engendered: Cultural Discourse Studies (CDS) as it might be called. Ten years ago, it was but a nascent intellectual current that drew attention to the cultural nature of human discourse and communication (henceforth 'discourse' and 'communication' will be used interchangeably) and approaches to them; today it has become a trend-setter, one that even 'mainstream' traditions would ill-afford to ignore. In the context of increasingly hegemonic globalization in both society and scholarship, CDS has shown, over again and again, that human discourses are not just diversified, but also, very crucially, divided, and that especially non-Western scholars feel compelled and aspire to re-discover, re-claim or, where necessary, re-invent their own voices, identities and paradigms of research (see below). I shall take stock of this emerging, though still fledgling, multicultural-intellectual movement in terms of its motivating factors, achievements and contributions; but I shall also remind us of unfulfilled missions as well as dilemmatic realities and suggest what new endeavours must be made. After all, this journal is designed and dedicated to providing for the advancement of CDS (Shi-xu 2006, 2009; see also Shi-xu 2015).

Problems encountered: cultural diversity, development and division

CDS has proceeded from the observation that Westcentrism is the ideological system of practice that has remained one of the central problems of contemporary society in general and of discourse and communication scholarship in particular (Shi-xu 2015). To that, it has sometimes been retorted that discourse and communication theory itself is culturally neutral since it does take culture into account: it considers cultural context as a determiner of ways of speaking and understanding and this is the case with the ethnography of communication, for example. Alternatively, it has been contended that

globalization, which is as old as the human kind itself, has traversed all cultures, such that it will be perverse (or technically speaking, 'essentialist', 'homogenizing/overgeneralizing', 'reifying' and 'polarizing') to insist on notions such as the West, the non-West, the East, the Global South/North, etc. Such a counter-argument is normally launched from under the banners of 'post-modernism', 'de-constructionism' or even 'post-colonialism'.

So, as everyone should be clear, discourse and communication studies is by definition not, and cannot be, culturally biased; the researchers are culturally innocent and neutral. And so, 'the West' and 'the East', 'the Global South' and 'the Global North', are in fact the same as, and therefore, equal to, one another; human societies at large are but 'super-diverse' communities on a par with one another, more or less; if, for example, the American-West is to blame at all, whether for global capitalism, neoliberalism, militarism or cultural imperialism, then, so are the Rest/Others. Do they really mean it?

Well, the contenders of those 'anti-essentialist' theses may not actually be intent on such implications, but effectively these are the rhetorical and pragmatic consequences nonetheless. And yet, CDS'ers, especially those who live and work outside the global centres, feel differently about the nature and state of our contemporary world in general, and about our current academia in particular. What they experience rather is that universalized 'western' conceptions mismatch 'non-western' realities on the ground; academic freedom and ethical integrity are restrained by an exclusively economic rationale of neoliberalism (Asante 2006; Batibo 2009; Fitzpatrick 2009; Lawless 2014; Makoni 2012; Ossewaarde 2014). They conclude that the one-way export of knowledge, education and scholarship from the global centres and their standardization and dominance in the developing societies, journal editorships, board memberships, authorships and intellectual dependencies (or 'academic aphasia') of Third World scholars and students, or more broadly, the current economic, political, religious, environmental, security crises – the Human Crisis really, along with their corollaries of underdevelopment, poverty, forced emigration, and European media's wide stereotyping of and prejudice against Muslim migrants and non-western countries, cannot be explained by mere linguistic features, textual strategies, cognitive representations, or some innocuous 'interconnections' or 'hybridities' of 'globalization' (Lawless 2014; Ossewaarde 2014). Refusing to be discombobulated by such 'pan-cultural' snares, they are compelled and determined to seek answers elsewhere: in the all-encompassing and ubiquitous cultural imperialism emanating from the Global Centres and in the possible cultural synergies from Third World communities as well as critical elements from the 'West', while not losing sight of internal complexities and dynamics whether in the 'West' or the 'East' (the *JMD* authors living in the 'West' but combating cultural imperialism are good reminders; so, too, are academics living in the 'East' but regurgitating Westcentric doctrines and interests).

For, we contend that culture is not just innocent 'difference' in knowledge, values or customs external to action and communication, but rather a historically evolved set of ways of thinking, concepts, symbols, representations (e.g. of the self and others), norms, rules, strategies, embodied in the actions and artifacts of a social community in power relations with those of other communities (Guilherme and Dietz 2015; Shi-xu 2009, 2015). We maintain, too, that culture is integral part of the life practice of a social community in relation to others, complex and dynamic, rather than fixed to people or place or time.

Consequently, CDS'ers take it upon themselves to engage with culture – cultural diversity, development and division in particular – and to bring these issues to the centre stage of discourse and communication scholarship, with the objective of forging a culturally conscious, critical and creative form of discourse and communication scholarship. Specifically, they foray into questions like: (a) how we are to combat Westcentrism, (b) how we are to enable and enhance cultural co-existence, harmony and prosperity, and (c) how we are to identify, characterize, explain, interpret and appraise culturally divergent, productive or competing discourses – not only of familiar, privileged and dominant societies, but especially of less known, marginalized or otherwise disadvantaged communities.

Phenomena studied: a holistic and cultural view

A major contribution of CDS via *JMD* is to be found at the ontological and theoretical levels of discourse and communication research. That is, CDS abolishes the conventional and common binary notions of 'text' and 'context', 'discourse' and 'society', 'representation' and 'reality', the 'micro' and the 'macro', and re-unifies them into one of an all-encompassing and dialectic whole. This exponential expansion and enrichment of the concept of discourse and communication may be understood from two perspectives.

Firstly, human discourse is re-conceptualised as multi-faced but integrated communicative event (or a class thereof named activity) in which people accomplish social interaction through linguistic and other symbolic means and mediums in particular historical and cultural relations. This re-definition of the object of enquiry allows researchers to go beyond the mono-causal, mechanistic explanation and take all the components and all the relations of the communicative event/activity as potentially questionable topics: the subjects and identities, acts and intents, mediums and channels (including temporal and spatial settings), purposes and effects, historical and cultural relations involved. Accordingly, many *JMD* authors have engaged in the analysis and assessment of historical, cultural, social, economic, mediational aspects and relations as long as they pertain to a communicative event in question, thereby uncovering features and problems which would otherwise go unheeded (see Blommaert 2011). So for example, to understand tourism representation of a marginalized locale, the media, the semiotics, the producer, personal circumstances and socioeconomic situations, etc. are all looked into with the result that subversive possibilities of the stereotyped are found, paradoxically, to be enabled by social class resources (Kauppinen 2014). Instead of mere 'rhetoric of economics', the economics expert is studied and revealed to be rhetorically in possession of diverse identities in addition to being an economist (Maesse 2015; O'Rourke 2015). Beyond mere 'language in the media', the media and globalization are treated as object of communication theorizing and analysis (Bouvier 2015: 158–9; Gunaratne 2013; Waisbord 2013).

Secondly, human discourse, or rather discourses, are recognized and highlighted as *cultural* in nature – cultural in the sense that human discourses are not simply differentiated, but diversified and, very importantly, divided. Culture, understood holistically, and so historically, socially, economically, politically, ethnically, locally and globally, is saturated with power relations and power contestation; discourse and communication in and through which culture is embodied, transmitted and transformed, are a primary site of power operation and use: creation, maintenance, execution, subjugation, legitimization, contestation,

consolidation, etc. (Carbaugh 2007). In this light, contemporary human culture is characterised by a disorder of hegemony and resistance where developed Global Powers dominate, repress and exploit developing, Third World societies on the one side and on the other side the latter re-align themselves in response to the unequal and unjust order. Accordingly, a number of *JMD* authors have exposed and critiqued cultural-imperialist, Westcentric biases in society as well as in scholarship. In the academic domain, they point out that Western communication scholarship as global discursive practice overlooks and eclipses non-Western intellectual legacies (Miike 2009; Pardo 2010; Prah 2010). Against the universalizing Anglo-American 'mainstream', they have highlighted the cultural and historical nature of the discourse discipline in general and its cultural complexities in particular by identifying and distinguishing German and French approaches, respectively (Angermüller 2011; Maingueneau 2011). In empirical research, it has been pointed out, for example, that Latin American realities require new research frameworks to overcome the constraints of the Eurocentric text-oriented analysis and such a move may lead to new methods and results (Bolívar 2010). They have also demonstrated that cultural elements, such as ethical codes and religious teachings, can be used as tentacles of political and military actions (e.g. Ergül, Gökalp & Cangöz 2010; Gavriely-Nuri 2012).

Paths chosen: local, indigenous and multicultural perspectives

Another set of contributions by CDS via *JMD* may be seen at the epistemological and methodological levels of discourse and communication research. Dissatisfied with rational reason and bi-polar thinking, scholars call out: 'Go East' (Gunaratne 2013). In this spirit, CDS'ers take the following as methodological principles: researchers are to be culturally grounded and continuously self-reflexive, their perspectives to be dialectic and multiple, their data to be diversified and historical and their conclusions to be dialogical and temporary. Accordingly, a number of specific tools have been developed: (a) thorough cultural experience as essential starting point, (b) local cultural 'context' as both sine qua non and as object of enquiry along with 'text', (c) cultural members as agent and authority of information, (d) longitudinal and multifarious data as necessary basis and (e) explicit cultural-political positions as standard.

A plethora of epistemological feats and methodological techniques from *JMD* may be mentioned here. Some *JMD* authors have shown that Asian religious teachings and philosophies can serve as cultural inspirations for meta-theory of human communication and global mediatization (e.g. Gunaratne 2013; Ishii 2007). Others have excavated classical Indian notions of meaning of language that can serve as rudiments of Asian communication theory (Dissanayake 2009). Still others have argued how the traditional Chinese notion of infinite-meaning-of-finite-language can help understand contemporary Chinese communication, beyond the Western logical-rational approach (Cao 2008; Shixu 2009). Further, negotiations between Western and non-Western scholars have been proposed for dissolving mismatches between universalized Western principles and grassroots realities (Makoni 2012). In a similar vein, a culturally open attitude of accepting what is the best from culturally divergent perspectives in scientific thinking and understanding has been suggested (Candela 2013). Where data search and selection are concerned, many *JMD* authors have found it necessary to combine different methodological approaches, collecting different types of data and using diverse methods (e.g. Kauppinen 2014: 5–6).

It has been shown, too, how native cultural discourses offer variant versions of ‘social science’ as we know it (Lenkersdorf 2006).

Politics pursued: cultural co-existence, harmony and prosperity

In line with its holistic and cultural view of human communication, CDS has set upon itself the cultural–political aims of undermining cultural hegemony and fostering cultural harmony in both scholarship and society (Shi-xu 2015). These objectives are to be realized through exposing, deconstructing and neutralizing ethnocentrism on the one hand and developing, practicing and advocating locally grounded and globally minded principles and strategies of communication research on the other hand.

One way that *JMD* has engaged with CDS’s cultural politics is to give precedence to neglected or otherwise under-studied topics in international teaching and research on language, discourse and communication. Thus, recurring themes covered in the journal are issues of war, peace and reconciliation (Gavriely-Nuri 2012; Park 2012; Verdoolaege 2008), development (particularly in Third World societies) (Della Faile 2011; Melkote & Steeves 2015; Pieterse 2011; Servaes & Lie 2015), whiteness and ethnocentrism in society and scholarship (Edwards 2014; Ono 2014; Ossewaarde 2014; Torres-Simon 2015; Van Sterkenburg & Knoppers 2012), difficulties and needs in Third World academia (Batibo 2009; Heller 2009; Pardo 2010), cultural reflexivity and critique in ‘mainstream’ western scholarship (O’Sullivan 2013; Scollo 2011), non-western intellectual resources for research innovation (Dissanayake 2009; Gunaratne 2013; Miike 2009; Xiao & Chen 2009).

At a more fundamental level, one will witness that an important strand of work in *JMD* identifies limitations of Western discourse theory and research and discloses cultural–intellectual consequences caused by imposition of Western frameworks on non-Western societies (Asante 2006; Gordon 2007; Makoni 2012; May 2012; Miike 2009; Shi-xu 2009). Another strand of work produced in *JMD* constitutes a *cri du coeur* over the vexed conditions and situations left behind by European colonialism (Batibo 2009; Pardo 2010; Prah 2010). One will note, too, that a recurring and prominent theme in *JMD* is that Western, that is, European and American, everyday and literary discourses, systematically stereotype discriminate against non-Western countries and societies, ethnic minorities and immigrants, but imagine the racial hegemony of whiteness as the bastion of diligence, discipline and dominance, thereby lending support to their political and foreign policies (e. g. Edwards 2014; Fitzpatrick 2009; Lawless 2014; Ono 2014; Ossewaarde 2014; Torres-Simon 2015; Van Sterkenburg & Knoppers 2012). On a positive note, the free and fresh atmosphere in most African urban centers which undergo increasing multilingualism is shown to contribute to better understanding, growth of smaller languages, larger readerships, regional interaction and integration, and economic development (Barnard 2006; Prah 2010). It is worth noting, too, that the argument has been presented that, in place of the conceptual language that the Western-Northern English-speaking academy has put forward in the last century, new concepts be adopted to account more appropriately for the global inequality and diversity (Guilherme & Dietz 2015). Last but not least, the three highly acclaimed special issues of the journal sketch out, in broad lines, respectively Asian, African and Latin American paradigms of discourse and communication research

that can serve as milestones and signposts for future development of CDS (Miike 2009; Pardo 2010; Prah 2010).

Missions unaccomplished and struggle to continue

Far from jubilant, however, we must instead be wary of the fact that *JMD* is but 10 years old and CDS as cultural-intellectual movement just emerging. There are promises unfulfilled and missions unaccomplished; there are morasses lying ahead and obstacles looming large. We have many heavy tasks to carry out.

In CDS in general and in *JMD* in particular, we aspire to be culturally pluralist, whether in authorship, in publication content, or in approaches, particularly so with regard to the developing Third World that represents 80% of the humanity. But in reality, owing the objective and subjective conditions of our contemporary cultural predicament, this largest human population is still far less represented than ought to be the case. One central task of CDS and *JMD* is to (re)construct, develop and practice culturally innovative, appropriate and diverse frameworks of discourse and communication research. But at present, achievements are uneven and, with respect to the huge diversity and complexity of human discourses, may be even meager. While it is true that theoretical and meta-theoretical construction will be perennial and never-ending, much attention and effort are needed at this stage of paradigmatic or programmatic development.

Despite the difficulties, our objective remains clear: to achieve a culturally conscious, critical and creative form of discourse and communication scholarship that helps with the co-existence, harmony and prosperity of human communities. To that end, we must first of all continue reflexive and critical efforts to systematically and thoroughly deconstruct cultural hegemony in our own discipline and beyond. Second, we need to enlist more and more scholars from especially developing Third World societies to participate in the construction or re-invention of various cultural frameworks of research. Here it is crucially important to delve into aboriginal, native cultural and intellectual resources on the one hand and on the other investigate into local specific conditions, needs and aspirations. For the same purpose, third, we should seek assistance and advice from critical scholars from the 'mainstream'. In this respect, it may be stressed, too, that dialogue and exchange with especially contemporary critical currents, such as postmodernism, postcolonialism, feminism, can be highly fruitful for the advancement of CDS. By the same token, as *JMD* is not the only venue where CDS is done, we should try to form cultural-intellectual synergies through collaboration with other channels and platforms related to CDS, say the triennial International Conference of Multicultural Discourses (<http://www.shixu.com/institute-conference/index.asp>), the *Cultural Discourse Studies Series* (<https://www.routledge.com/series/CDSS>), or such journals as *Critical Arts*, *Kurgu On-line International Journal of Communication, Lingue, Culture, Mediazioni*, and *Covenant Journal of Language Studies*. All in all, *JMD* will continue to serve as firm supporter for all these endeavours.

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Editor-in-Chief

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