Jonathan Charteris-Black’s *Fire Metaphors* offers a study of the presence of fire in a variety of different discourses, including religious and political texts from a broad spectrum of contexts. The book aims to provide a comprehensive description and analysis of the different ways that fire appears in discourses of awe and authority. The book is separated into three parts, the first looking at fire in language, cognition, and culture more generally; the second looking at fire in religious discourse; and the third looking at fire in political discourse.

Charteris-Black (2016: 9) argues that fire is particularly interesting because, as a force, it offers a ‘model for understanding contrastive relationships’. Fire can be used to both create and destroy, and the book investigates the ways in which this contrast is mapped on to descriptions of experiences that are also fundamentally contrastive. This includes the sacred, where, for example, fire is used both in descriptions of punishment, but also to symbolise salvation or enlightenment.

The book uses corpus methodologies to look at language related to fire in different corpora, including British and American political speeches, sacred texts, and corpora of general use like the Contemporary Corpus of American English. As a starting point, Charteris-Black shows how fire metaphors can be classified into three different types using semantic field analysis: natural fire, functional fire, and organic fire. These different types of fire are then used to unpack the appearance of fire in various discourses and support the overall argument about the ambiguity of fire and its role as a contrastive force. Throughout the book, Charteris-Black employs the force dynamic model which shows how fire is often represented as an ‘antagonist’ force, which is resisted by a second, ‘inertia’ force, with an ‘agonist’ being acted upon. In one particularly compelling example, Charteris-Black shows how this ‘force-dynamic’ model works in particularly in the Old Testament of the Bible descriptions of judgement. In this example, the antagonist force is divine judgment (fire), and the inertia force is the tendency of believers to revert to pagan practices, and the agonist is the followers themselves (2016: 82). The
analysis shows that this model for describing the fear of judgment in the Bible occurs and re-occurs throughout the text, developing a vivid and compelling way of understanding judgement.

On a whole, Charteris-Black engages more with the texts and examples he is analysing than metaphor theory more broadly. By doing so, the book is a very interesting application of metaphor analysis, using the frame of metaphor to understand social practices and human experience. At the same time, although it is clearly not Charteris-Black’s intention to produce a text to further metaphor theory, more engagement with the literature might be useful, particularly in explaining the frame for analysis. For example, a ‘blending model’ of metaphor is introduced at one point to discuss fire metaphors in Hinduism (2016:e 119-120), but the same theory is not then applied at other points in the book. More might be done to draw in the rich work done in metaphor studies in recent years to further structure the arguments in the book.

The book is successful both as an analysis of metaphor and an introduction to each of the text types it discusses. A broad range of linguists, religious studies scholars, theologians, and political scientists will find something useful within it, and the ability to draw them together in one text is especially admirable. Each chapter offers a useful background section for the discourse Charteris-Black is focusing on and he fills the book with examples from the texts he is investigating. The examples can be slightly overwhelming at times, with extracts of texts taking up large portions of some of the chapters, but this reflects Charteris-Black’s commitment to building vivid and extensive empirical evidence for his claims, which is quite welcome in the field of metaphor analysis, where evidence-based models employing significant datasets across more than one text type and culture are needed. By applying the same force-dynamic model to each set of discourses, Charteris-Black is able to build a particularly compelling argument for his claim that fire is particularly salient in human experience. The fact that similarities can be seen across cultures and times offers strong evidence for the role of embodied experience in the development of metaphor. With the depth and breadth of evidence, the aim of providing a comprehensive analysis of fire in discourses of awe and authority discourses is decisively met.

Although Charteris-Black does an admirable job of applying the same force-dynamic model to each of the different text types, there is not necessarily a clear conclusion and statement about the overall importance of the study. With such a diverse potential audience for the book, drawing together the interests in a conclusion would have been welcome. Despite this caveat, the book will be useful for any student of metaphor, especially those who are interested in how embodied experience of the physical world, and particularly how natural forces of fire, appear in a variety of inter-related ways across cultures, text types, and time.
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October 2016: Cupertino, California. A theatre filled with a cheering audience. Although reminiscent of a pop concert, this crowd of predominantly middle-aged white men is here to celebrate the launch of new Apple gadgets and technology. This devotion to technology, or ‘technological fetishism’ as Roderick calls it, is only one example of how technologies have become interwoven with our culture. Taking us on a journey of the interconnected discourses of technology as progress, technological determinism, technological fetishism and technological (dis)satisfaction, Ian Roderick’s *Critical Discourse Studies and Technology: A multimodal approach to analysing technoculture* illustrates the increasing embedment of technology in (domestic) culture and vice versa.

As a critical discourse analyst, Roderick convincingly argues against the idea that technologies are neutral tools; instead, he offers a systemic approach to analysing ‘how our understanding of technology and the ways in which we engage with it are discursively constituted’ (2016: 3). The comprehensive review of many of the tools, methods and theories required for a multimodal analysis of technoculture and their application make Roderick’s work perfectly suitable for students who are interested in the analysis of multimodal documents. However, Roderick also appeals to the more advanced reader with his in-depth discussions of a range of still and moving images and even multimodal experiences such as Walt Disney’s *Carousel of Progress*. The examples that reflect Roderick’s interest in new forms of militarism such as Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) robots are particularly convincing. Roderick’s Critical Discourse Analytic (CDA) perspective on concepts such as progress and technology presents thought-provoking insights into their development and illustrates the various understandings of and ambivalence towards them.

Despite Roderick’s thorough analyses, however, the wider context in which the examples are embedded at times seems to be backgrounded in favour of detailed descriptions of what is directly at hand. In his elaborate consideration of two different adverts featuring robots as protagonists, for instance, the meaning production of the adverts is not addressed, which neglects the aim of the advertising campaigns. This sidelines the significance that advertising discourse attributes to the advert’s goal, which invariably is to persuade the consumer to undertake action or to change people’s perception of a brand. Furthermore, the chapters surrounding technological fetishism and technological (dis)satisfaction, though concerned with the concepts of consumer culture and capitalism, perhaps would have benefitted from the inclusion of a broader consideration of consumption, the widespread deification of consumer goods outside of technology, and perhaps the
substantial link between identity and consumption that has been firmly established across many cultures (cf. Bocock 1993; Belch and Belch 2014).

Besides offering an understanding of discourses relating to technology, Roderick also demonstrates an excellent critical awareness of multimodal theories, which are still developing rapidly. Rather than unquestioningly adopting and applying some of the earlier methodologies that have been proposed in the multimodal field, Roderick remains aware of the limitations of such methodologies and is hesitant to make sweeping generalisations (also see Bateman 2008; Thomas 2009). His emphasis on a document’s elements’ ‘potential to signify’, echoing Machin and Mayr’s (2012) admirable work on multimodal CDA, rather than relying on ‘established’ fixed links between certain layout and colour patterns is refreshing and could be used as an example for other multimodal research.

As a work employing a multimodal discourse analysis, *Critical Discourse Studies and Technology* raises several significant issues relating to multimodal analysis more generally. As is common in publications on multimodality, the use of black and white printing, no doubt demanded by publishers to reduce their costs, raises the question whether it is appropriate to remove colour – arguably a mode in itself – from images, especially when it is referred to in the analysis. After all, reading a description of colour may be very different from seeing it in reality. This matter points to the wider issue of the appropriateness of describing all of the artefact’s modes by means of just one mode (i.e. the written verbal mode). For example, Roderick elaborately describes all the different shots for the opening sequence of a strategy game *Future Force Company Commander* (F2C2) in terms of image, music and transitions. Although Roderick’s attempt is comprehensive and laudable – and is not critiqued here – no description is likely to ever capture the actual combination of the modes and the experience they create. As Garroni illustrated in his *Progetto di Semiotica* (1973), only some content can be conveyed both by linguistic devices (*L*) and non-linguistic devices (*NL*); the rest of the content is ‘unspeakable’ but not ‘inexpressible’ (also see Eco 1979). This forms a true problem for academia, with its near-exclusive reliance on the verbal (written) mode. If we truly want to progress the field of multimodality, we need to reconsider this favouritism of one mode and perhaps think of novel ways to let people experience the separate modes that feature in our analyses (e.g. making use of (mobile) technologies). Not surprisingly, ebooks have been leading the way in this regard by, for example, including links to YouTube videos.

Returning to Roderick’s work, this timely, well-written and comprehensive ‘approach to analysing technoculture’ introduces important reflections for a technology-embedded world. Moreover, Roderick provides valuable tools, methods and insights for the execution of a multimodal study, and, perhaps unintentionally, raises important issues, such as those identified above, for the advancement of the wider field of multimodal studies.

**References**


