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Roderick, I. (2016). *Critical Discourse Studies and Technology: A Multimodal Approach to Analysing Technoculture*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. Pages 232; ISBN: 9781472569486 (pbk). Price: £35.96 (pbk).

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. Bocoock 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.

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