

Introducing Semiotic Landscapes

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In the era of multimodality semiotic modes other than language are treated as fully capable of serving for representation and communication. Indeed, language, whether as speech or as writing, may now often be seen as ancillary to other semiotic modes: to the visual for instance. Language may now be 'extravisual'. The very facts of the new communicational landscape have made that inescapably the issue.

Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001: 46

The problem of the proper conceptualization of space is resolved through human practice with respect to it. In other words, there are no philosophical answers to philosophical questions that arise over the nature of space – the answers lie in human practice. The question 'what is space?' is therefore replaced by the question 'how is it that different human practices create and make use of different conceptualizations of space?'

Harvey, 2006: 125–126

As suggested by the subtitle of this book, we are concerned here with the interplay between language, visual discourse, and the spatial practices and dimensions of culture, especially the textual mediation or discursive construction of place and the use of space as a semiotic resource in its own right. The broader context which we are interested in is the extent to which these mutual processes are in turn shaped by the economic and political reorderings of post-industrial or advanced capitalism, intense patterns of human mobility, the mediatization of social life (Fairclough, 1999), and transnational flows of information, ideas and ideologies (Appadurai, 1990, 1996). This dual attention to the multimodality and political-economy of discourse is motivated by new ways of thinking within our own scholarly field (see, for example, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen quoted above) as well as the growing recognition of – and interest in – discourse beyond our field (see, for example, David Harvey also quoted above). Whether as a consequence of intellectual fashion or as a tangible experience of contemporary life, no self-respecting scholar these days can afford to overlook the discourse/s of place and the place/s of discourse.

The main title of the book is, in turn, meant to reflect this wide-ranging, yet – we believe – coherent scope. Although the focus of the majority of the chapters

is on written language ‘in place’, we have chosen not to call this book ‘Linguistic Landscapes’, as some of our predecessors have (e.g. Ben-Rafael et al., 2004, 2006; Gorter, 2006a,b; Backhaus, 2007; Shohamy and Gorter, 2008; see also Spolsky and Cooper, 1991), because in this collection we are keen to emphasize the way written discourse interacts with other discursive modalities: visual images, nonverbal communication, architecture and the built environment. For this reason, ‘linguistic’ is only one, albeit extremely important, element for the construction and interpretation of place. Although potentially misleading – all landscape is semiotic, i.e. its meaning is always construed in the act of socio-cultural interpretation – we follow Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003) in making a qualified distinction between semiotic and non-semiotic spaces; we thus take *semiotic landscape* to mean, in the most general sense, any (public) space with visible inscription made through deliberate human intervention and meaning making. However, as is clear from its thematic and empirical scope (i.e. data sets oriented to by individual chapters) writing and image, broadly defined, are at the analytic centre for most part of the book. The interpretive frameworks range from sociolinguistic to discourse analytic, encompassing visual, multimodal and mediated approaches, to social semiotic and cultural/critical, and this ‘progression’ is reflected in the way we have sequenced the book’s chapters.

Framing semiotic landscapes

The study of landscape has been traditionally a prerogative of art historians and geographers (see, for example, Andrews, 1999; Cosgrove, 1998; Wylie, 2007), although in recent years it has developed into a truly interdisciplinary project (e.g. DeLue and Elkins, 2008). The role of the human geographer Denis Cosgrove (e.g. 1984, 1998) in bringing these perspectives together as part of the ‘humanist turn’ in geography cannot be overestimated. Cosgrove departs from the narrow, mechanistic views of landscape as ‘an artistic or literary response to the visible scene’ (Cosgrove, 1984: 46) or as a lived environment examined and evaluated to facilitate local government aerial planning. In particular, Cosgrove rejects the utilitarian, perception-led studies of landscape in favour of theorizing the geographical environment as incorporating the individual, imaginative and creative aspects of human experience. However, Cosgrove does trace the (Western) idea of landscape to its roots in the scientific and artistic developments of the Italian Renaissance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the combined work of mathematicians and artists (typically one and the same person), motivated equally by the pursuit of artistic and scientific knowledge, led to the formulation of the geometric principles for the creation of ‘realistic illusion’ to represent a three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface. The principles of the technique known as *linear perspective* were formulated by the Florentine artist and architect Leon

Battista Alberti in his *De Pictura* (On Painting, 1435) alongside the visual experiments of his close associate Filippo Brunelleschi; these principles were not only key for the subsequent compositional and aesthetic developments in painting, but were also applied to architecture, land survey, map-making, artillery science, and the measurement of distance, surface and volume, all pertinent to the early development of commerce, capitalist finance, agriculture, the land market, navigation and warfare, in sum, the early development of urban, bourgeois, rationalist conception of the world (Cosgrove, 1984; see also Panofsky, 1991 [1927]). Thus, landscape is defined by Cosgrove, borrowing John Berger's (1982) terminology, as a '*way of seeing* the external world' (1984: 46) and as 'a visual ideology' (47). This was evident both in art and other applications of linear perspective. 'The artist, through perspective, establishes the arrangement or composition, and thus the specific time, of the events described, determines – in both senses – the "point of view" to be taken by the observer, and controls through framing the scope of reality revealed' (Cosgrove, 1984: 48). In cartography, applications of geometrical principles led to the production of detailed survey maps of cities allowing accurate yet detached, distant and dominating views of vast urban areas, placing the human observer in the 'divine' position of creator and controller, not unlike in the vast panoramic landscapes by Titian and Bruegel which, for example, give the observer a sense of dominion and control over space (certainly a technique carried through to the later medium of photography and used widely in a range of commercial contexts, cf. Thurlow and Jaworski, this volume). These achievements in geometrical representation of space coincided with, or rather facilitated, the (colonial) appropriation of territory and of the production of (private) property:

Surveyors' charts which located and measured individual estates, for example in England after the dissolution of monasteries; cartographers' maps which used the graticule to apportion global space, for example the line defined by Pope Alexander VI dividing the new world between Portugal and Spain; engineers' plans for fortresses and cannon trajectories to conquer or defend national territory, as for example Vauban's French work or Sorte's for the Venetian defences against Austria. (Cosgrove, 1984: 55)

But landscape as a way of seeing is not to be confined to the mediated representations of space in art and literature. It is a broader concept pertaining to how we view and interpret space in ways that are contingent on geographical, social, economic, legal, cultural and emotional circumstances, as well as our practical uses of the physical environment as nature and territory, aesthetic judgements, memory and myth, for example drawing on religious beliefs and references, historical discourses, politics of gender relations, class, ethnicity, and the imperial projects of colonization – all of which are still present today and consistently reproduced in, for example, contemporary tourist landscapes (Massey, 1994; Cosgrove, 2008 [1998]; Crouch, 1999; Cartier and Lew, 2005; Osborne, 2000).

Thus, Cosgrove and others position the idea of landscape within the sphere of social and cultural practice, as our ways of seeing are subject to a number of competing 'scopic regimes' or 'visual subcultures' (Jay, 1998: 4) shaped in part by the changes in the representation of space. For example, most tourists visiting the Yosemite Park 'see' it as mediated through Anselm Adams' famous photographs, which they attempt to recreate in their own holiday snaps (cf. DeLue and Elkins, 2008), just as William Hodges' idyllic paintings of Tahiti inspired by his journey accompanying Captain Cook on one of his voyages in the eighteenth century continue to provide a template for depicting the exotic and 'unspoilt' 'winter sun' destinations in tourist brochures (Khan, 2003; de Botton, 2003).

Defining landscape as a way of seeing underscores its historical volatility. Commenting on the 'photographic turn' in mediation of space, John Berger observes: 'Every drawing or painting that used perspective proposed to the spectator that he was the unique centre of the world. The camera – and more particularly the movie camera – demonstrated that there was no centre' (Berger, 1972: 18). Other technological developments, especially with regard to mobility, are equally significant here. Opening up of space for gazing or glancing from the moving train, motor car, or airplane afforded new modes of experiencing large vistas and 'passing' terrains, 'reaching an apogee in the 1968 photograph of the earth rising over the lunar surface' (Cosgrove, 2008 [1998]: 31; see also Schivelbusch, 1986). John Urry (1995, 2005, 2007) links the transformation of *land*, a tangible commodity to be toiled, bought and sold, and passed on from generation to generation, to *landscape*, a place of affect, contemplative looking, gazing, connoisseurship, and its particular significance marked by the increase in people's mobility, especially the rise of 'scenic tourism' in the eighteenth century. But being on the move has also turned landscape into a succession of decontextualized, passing images neatly framed by the rectangular of the train or the oval of the plane window (again, see Schivelbusch, 1986). As Urry observes, '[t]he Ford brochure of 1949 declared that "The 49 Ford is a living room on wheels" (Marsh and Collett, 1986: 11; the VW camper is described as a "Room with a View")' (Urry, 2004: 30–31). In this spirit, one of the major attractions of the Venice-Simplon Orient Express mentioned on its website for the Venice–Paris–London train service is 'gazing at the beautiful passing scenery of the Italian Dolomites and the Swiss Alps' on the first day of the journey. Perhaps understandably the website is silent on the dominant urban and industrial landscape the train will be passing through the next morning, with numerous commuters gazing at the anachronistic curiosity of a restored train and its 'high-end' passengers, making their way so slowly through the crowded transportation hubs in and around modern-day Paris. For all its juxtaposition, the Orient-Express attempts to recreate and reglamorize not only a mode of travel but also a way of consuming place/s.

Ironically, rather than opening up more space, speed may at times interfere with the landscape turning it into a blur, allowing only short glimpses of the passing scenery, and noticeable only when something 'meaningful' happens

to come to our field of vision (cf. Bissell, 2009; and Schivelbusch, 1986, on 'panoramic travel'). And that's only if one is lucky enough not to have all the 'scenery' obscured by the reflected interior of a night train, or obliterated in a traffic jam stuck behind an SUV, or substituted for the black voids of the windows in an underground train. Nevertheless, mobility, and especially auto-mobility, has undeniably altered rural and especially urban landscapes, with transport infrastructure (roads, car parks, railways), architecture (stations, out-of-town shopping centres, drive-through restaurants, petrol and service stations, motels, coach and train stations, and airports) (cf. Urry, 2004; Pascoe, 2001), traffic signs, signposting and billboards. And by adding another layer of semioticization, cars, trains, trams, buses, bicycles, motorbikes, rikshaws, ships, ferries, yachts, barges, aeroplanes, etc., are as much a means of accessing new scenery as part of the scenery itself (cf. Thurlow and Aiello, 2007; Sebba, this volume; Dray, this volume).

In recent decades, new technological developments have opened up new ways of representing, accessing and theorizing space/place. Especially with the rise of digital media and the omnipresence of screens in public and private lives such as television sets, computer monitors, CCTV, electronic billboards, information displays, screens in mobile phones, mp3 players, digital cameras and camcorders, and a whole range of 'interactive' screens attached to machines for drawing cash, 'fast' check-in at airports, making payment at car parks, and so on, social and material landscapes have become more multimodal and more mediatized than ever before (Jewitt and Triggs, 2006; Jones, this volume). This is, after all, the age of cyberspace. And it is by responding to the digital, virtual 'revolution' that Daniels and Cosgrove (1988: 8) venture their metaphor for the understanding of (contemporary) landscape as 'a flickering text displayed on the word-processor screen whose meaning can be created, extended, altered, elaborated and finally obliterated by the merest touch of a button'.

In human geography, the metaphor of landscape as text and spectacle, which is of particular relevance to the remit and methodological approaches represented in this volume, has a well-established position. Following their critique of mimetic, realist, universalizing interpretations of the surveyed world through 'descriptive fieldwork' or observation modelled on positivist science, Duncan and Ley (1993) align themselves with hermeneutic interpretations which posit an intersubjective and dialogic relationship between researchers embedded within particular intellectual and institutional contexts and their data – other people and places. This approach makes way for the view of landscape as 'the discursive terrain across which the struggle between the different, often hostile, codes of meaning construction has been engaged' (Daniels and Cosgrove, 1993: 59), and it is only one step away from forging links between landscape and identity, social order and power.

Each society's 'moral order' is reflected in its particular spatial order and in the language and imagery by which that spatial order is represented.

Conversely, the social is spatially constituted, and people make sense of their social identity in terms of their environment. Their place of residence offers a map of their place in society: we produce not housing but 'dwellings of definite sorts, as a peasant's hut or nobleman's castle . . . [in] a continuous process of social life in which men [sic] reciprocally define objects in terms of themselves and themselves in terms of objects' (Sahlins, 1976: 169), To 'place' someone, to 'know one's place': this language of social existence is unmistakably geographical. Cultural geography thus calls for a decoding of landscape imagery, a reading of the environmental 'maps of meaning' (Jackson, 1989) which reveal and reproduce – and sometimes resist – social order. (Mills, 1993: 150)

But landscape is not to be reduced 'to a mere social construction' (Cosgrove, 2008 [1988]: 34). In fact, the above quote emphasizes the dichotomous, dialectical nature of landscape both as physical (built) environment, a context for human action and socio-political activity, while at the same time a symbolic system of signifiers with wide-ranging affordances activated by social actors to position themselves and others in that context. This dichotomy is captured by John Wylie's metaphor of landscape as tension, when he asks whether landscape is 'the world we are living *in*, or a scene we are looking *at*, from afar?' (Wylie, 2007: 1). The answer is probably both, as suggested by Kenneth Olwig's (2008) distinction in the meaning of landscape as 'domain' and 'scenery', or neither, as suggested by John Urry: 'Landscape is . . . neither nature nor culture, neither mind nor matter. It is the world as known to those who have dwelt in that place, those who currently dwell there, those who will dwell there, and those whose practical activities take them through its many sites and journey along its multiple paths' (Urry, 2007: 32).

Making space, locating self

An imperceptible line seems to divide studies of 'landscape' from the cultural, social and political aspects of space more broadly. Within the confines of a brief overview, we cannot do justice to the vast literature on this topic in human geography, anthropology and sociology, but in this section we attempt to draw some points of contact between these traditions of work and the linguistic and semiotic approaches to the study of space represented in this book. As we started by noting above, space and spatiality are key topics of concern for a wide range of contemporary scholars, prompting Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift describe it as 'the everywhere of modern thought' (2000: 1). Central to this 'spatial turn' is the recognition that space is not only physically but also socially constructed, which necessarily shifts absolutist notions of space towards more communicative or discursive conceptualizations (e.g. Harvey, 1989, 2006; Lefebvre, 1991; Massey and Jess, 1995). As such, the focus of scholarly interest

is nowadays often less on space *per se* as it is on *spatialization*, the different processes by which space comes to be represented, organized and experienced.

One of the central interests in this retheorizing of space is the notion of the social construction of place and people's 'sense of place'. In these terms, space is not regarded as something purely physical or neatly bounded. Rather, it is a 'multiplicity' (Massey, 2005). As people and cultures are located in space, it is particularly the idea of 'home' (understood as points of origin and belonging) that is inevitably bound up with specific geographical locations which we come to know and experience both sensually and intellectually through semiotic framing and various forms of discursive construal (Entrikin, 1991; Johnstone, 2004). We create our identities in part through the process of geographical imagining, the locating of self in space, claiming the ownership of specific places, or by being excluded from them, by sharing space and interacting with others, however subtly and fleetingly, for example, as strangers in a large city (Simmel, 1997).

By the same token, our sense of national or regional identity is closely linked to the nation's collective gaze at the physical attributes of landscape, especially the pictorial, cartographic and textual representations of the countryside. The production of these landscapes in the construction of regional and national identity has been well recognized and extensively documented (e.g. Daniels, 1993; Matless, 1998; Rycroft and Cosgrove, 1995). Following on from the Industrial Revolution and into the twentieth century, the countryside, rural life, and the unspoiled wilderness of remote, uninhabited areas have been perceived as the sites of the 'soul' of the nation, national integrity, moral virtue, or freedom of spirit. The need to preserve the threatened countryside and iconic landscape from the spreading urbanization or such external threats as wars, has been considered a moral duty and vital for the protection of the nation (Cosgrove et al., 1995; Colls, 2002; Kumar, 2003). More recently, the iconic images of urban (capital) heartlands – buildings, statues, towers, gardens and so on (Lawson, 2001) – have themselves been landscaped and incorporated into popular and official imaginings of national identity.

The emergence of symbolic and mental landscapes as part of the regional and national identity building takes place through semioticizing processes referred to by Sörlin (1999) as the 'articulation of territory', whereby landscape features (such as mountains, rivers, coastal areas), alongside architectural (church spires, typical rural dwellings, bridges, etc.), and other, large-scale landscaping and engineering interventions (parks, dams, water reservoirs and so on), are described, reproduced and recreated in literary texts, art, models and maquettes in museums and so on, as well as through the social practice of tourism (cf. Cosgrove et al., 1995). The notion of territorial articulation intersects with Lefebvre's (1991) well-known dimensions of space which he calls *conceived* space, *perceived* space, and *lived* space. Briefly, conceived space corresponds to mental or represented images of space (e.g. those of advertising, Thurlow and Jaworski, this volume); perceived space is equivalent to material

or physical space responsible for economic production and social reproduction; while lived space is produced through the experiential intersection and/or interaction of both conceived and perceived space. In all three modes of space, or processes of *spatialization*, we find linguistic and other semiotic markings (texts) which define or organize the meaning of these spatial practices as well as social practices enacted in the spaces. For example, signs that mark the 'turf' boundaries (experiential spaces), indexical signs identifying specific places (representational, perceptual spaces), and 'overlayed' signs such as graffiti (reimagining spaces), all interact with one another, with the spaces of their emplacement, and with the social actors inhabiting these spaces in creating complex networks of meaning, or 'semiotic aggregates' (Scollon and Wong Scollon, 2003).

Imagery of place is, of course, an important resource for diasporic communities in maintaining their sense of national or ethnic identity and through which to express their longing and nostalgia for the 'lost' homeland. Place facilitates and creates the 'collective memory' of diaspora (Harvey, 1989). As Garrett et al. (2005: 532) state for 'diasporic social groups . . . imagery of "home" has the potential to bridge across the physical space that separates "new communities" from their "roots of origin", linking past with present in the compression of time and space.' In their daily acts of identity, immigrant communities not only transpose images of 'home' into the mediated and mediated spaces in which they live their diasporic subjectivities. They transform the typically urban areas of their concentration by (re)semioticizing these spaces, creating orders of indexicality which positions them in complex ways *vis-à-vis* their ancestral and host communities with the written and pictorial signs over shops, restaurants, travel agents, internet and telephone communications centres, cultural institutions and so on (cf. Collins and Slembrouck, 2004). Immigrant languages, national flags, colours, emblems, décor and architectural detail (e.g. gates marking the entrance to 'China towns' in European and North American cities) index these communities and allow them to claim these urban spaces as 'their own' – to make the foreign and distant, familiar and present.

Of course, leaving visible traces of human activity and social interactions within space is by no means the sole prerogative of migrant communities. Turning space into place, or creating a sense of place, is arguably a universal human need and an inevitable outcome of various (inter)actions involving the manipulation of 'nature' through agriculture, architecture, and landscaping, and symbolically, via such activities as depicting, narrating and remembering. Places thus come to be known both sensually and intellectually (Entrikin, 1991). They are also known discursively and only ever made meaningful in discourse. Speaking, writing, and other semiotic codes found *in* space index particular localities, orient us through different levels of territorial and societal stratification including identity claims, power relations, and their contestations (Johnstone, 2004). All of these practices involve territorial claims, spatial segregation or

encroachment, and the categorization of social actors into ingroup and outgroup members, into Self and Other. For example, Edensor and Millington (2009) demonstrate how the British media engage in the vilifying criticism of prominent, often extravagantly bright and multi-coloured outdoor Christmas-light displays in many working-class areas in the United Kingdom, establishing and reinforcing negative stereotypes encapsulated in the disparaging term ‘chavs’ (i.e. ‘lowly working-class “others”’, *ibid.*: 104). Such displays, contrasting with the more ‘understated’ Christmas-light displays in middle-class areas, and the normative media discourses ‘express different contemporary processes of class formation [which] operate within distinct circuits that provoke questions about social connectedness and the power to mobilize identity within different spatial contexts’ (*ibid.*). Importantly, for our purposes, this is a story of space – spatialization – that is quintessentially semiotic (and meta-semiotic).

Although sociolinguists have long associated different ways of speaking with territorially-defined identities of speakers (through association of linguistic variables with neighbourhoods, cities, regions, or nations) it was not until recently that they became influenced by cultural geographers and started making more explicit connections between speech variation and place as a more dynamic, performative concept replacing the traditional view of place as a static, *a priori* ‘location’ of persons and objects in space. For example, Barbara Johnstone (2004) relates the idea of creating a sense of localness through the ‘local’ forms of speech, their development, cultivation, and folk-linguistic mythologies, particularly in response to the globalizing processes increasing contact between ‘old’ and ‘new’ ways of speaking. In her detailed ethnographic study of Mt. Pleasant, an area of Washington DC, Modan (2007) examines discourse as a form of spatial rather than social action, and demonstrates how the residents’ spoken and written, private and public discourses and interactions create different conceptions of the neighbourhood and spatialized identities across ethnic, gender, socio-economic boundaries. Written from the position of language policy and planning, Mac Giolla Chríost’s (2007) study takes a macro-sociolinguistic approach to theorizing urban spaces with regard to power relations and identity formation through the lens of place-naming, multilingualism, linguistic vitality, and language policy (cf. Shohamy, 2006).

‘Linguistic landscapes’

Most (English-language) studies of linguistic landscape to date take as their starting point the definition proposed by Rodrigue Landry and Richard Bourhis (1997), which is recognized as the first major attempt to link publicly displayed – or *emplaced* – discourse to some aspects of the sociolinguistic reality of the place – in this case, the ethnolinguistic vitality of different communities sharing a

particular territory. Building on the work of Jacques Leclerc (1989), Landry and Bourhis propose that:

The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration. (Landry and Bourhis, 1997: 25)

Landry and Bourhis go on to distinguish between ‘private’ and ‘government’ signs. The former include ‘commercial signs on storefronts and business institutions (e.g. retail stores and banks), commercial advertising on billboards, and advertising signs displayed in public transport and on private vehicles’ (p. 26). The latter include ‘public signs used by national, regional, or municipal governments in the following domains: road signs, place names, street names, and inscriptions on state buildings including ministries, hospitals, universities, town halls, schools, metro stations, and public parks’ (ibid.). The linguistic profile of the private and government signs may be similar or discordant; other things being equal, however, it usually appears to be more diverse in the private ones, reflecting more accurately the multilingual reality of a particular area or location (in this volume see chapters by Kallen; Coupland; Dray; Sebba; Mitchell). It is commonly believed that, apart from indexing a particular linguistic community, the act of displaying a language, especially on official, central or local government signage, carries the important symbolic function of increasing its value and status. Thus, the presence and dominance of one language over others (in frequency of occurrence or prominence of display) may indicate the relative demographic and institutional power of an ethnolinguistic group over others. In cases of conflict, repressed groups may be ideologically erased (Irvine and Gal, 2000) from public view (see Sebba, this volume). The meaning and power of language/s is/are thus dependent on, and derived from, space.

Working on aggregate, questionnaire data collected from among francophone high school students in different parts of Canada over a 10-year period, Landry and Bourhis concluded that, unsurprisingly, the presence of French in the linguistic landscape of the students’ environment (as defined above) was most prominent in those parts of Canada where the perceived in-group, francophone ethnolinguistic identity of the students was the greatest. They also suggested, however tentatively, that ‘the presence of private and government signs written in the in-group language might have acted as a stimulus for promoting the use of one’s own language in a broad range of language domains’ (p. 45), which is particularly salient in those areas where the in-group language is not dominant.

The more qualitative, ethnographically oriented studies of ‘language in place’ in our volume here (see Kallen; Sebba; Coupland; Dray; Pennycook; Piller; Mitchell) suggest a more subtle picture, where the degree of prominence

of a language in a particular site is not necessarily the most accurate indicator of the ethnolinguistic vitality of its speakers. Rather, the presence or absence of a language on public signage, in combination with the type (or genre) of signs, their contents and style, are indicative of public and private language ideologies, i.e. '[r]epresentations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world' (Woolard, 1998: 3). The two core elements of this definition – the *linguistic* and the *social* – are certainly inseparable, but have been variously oriented to in different definitions of language ideology. We want to cite some of them here, relying on Woolard's useful summary:

Linguistic or language ideologies have been defined most broadly as 'shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world' (Rumsey, 1990: 346). With more emphasis on linguistic structure and on the activist nature of ideology . . . Silverstein defines linguistic ideology as 'sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization of justification of perceived language structure and use' (1979: 193). On the other hand, with a greater emphasis on the social facet, language ideology has been defined as 'self-evident ideas and objectives a group holds concerning roles of language in the social experiences of members as they contribute to the expression of the group' (Heath, 1989: 53) and as 'the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests' (Irvine, 1989: 255). (Woolard, 1998: 3–4)

One key aspect of linguistic ideologies emerging from these definitions is that they are metalinguistic, or metadiscursive, in nature (cf. Coupland and Jaworski, 2004), i.e. they overlay, more or less explicitly, all language use with *value*, be it social, cultural, political, moral, economic or otherwise. The converse is equally valid; all metalinguistic commentary is ideological. By theorizing language ideologies as historical, Blommaert (1999a) positions them as debates which are 'more or less historically locatable periods in which a "struggle for authoritative entextualization" takes place' (Blommaert, 1999b: 9). He elaborates on this idea with reference to Silverstein and Urban's (1996: 11) notion of entextualization:

'Politics can be seen . . . as the struggle to entextualize authoritatively, and hence, in one relevant move, to fix certain metadiscursive perspectives on texts and discourse practices'. Metadiscursive entextualization – inserting texts into a chosen metadiscursive context and hence indicating the preferred way(s) of 'reading' these texts – is then a strategic practice often aimed at the 'acceptance of a metadiscourse by a community', a process that may be 'at the very center of a community's organizing social categories and their relationship, including political hierarchies' (1996: 12). (Blommaert, 1999b: 9)

If we agree, along with most contemporary geographers, to treat space as a discursive as well as physical formation (see above), it then follows that the emplacement, or entextualization, of linguistic signs is indeed a metadiscursive, and, of necessity, an ideological act (see also Coupland, this volume). In considering linguistic and other forms of semiotic inscription in space, Blommaert's and Silverstein and Urban's *preferred readings* of these inscriptions must be considered as part of Jay's 'scopic regime' (see above), not only affording a particular way of seeing but also subject to ideological dominance and contestation – as evidenced by a number of our contributors.

This growing recognition of the ideological implications of the language/space interplay – as well as the more widespread 'spatial turn' in the social sciences – which explains a recent surge of interest in the study of 'linguistic landscapes', with journal special issues, books and cyclical international conferences on the topic. Fuelled also by the spread and accessibility of digital photography, similar to developments in accessible, portable audio-recording technology which prompted the rise and expansion of sociolinguistics from the 1960s onwards (Gorter, 2006c), sociolinguists and other language scholars have turned to collecting samples of images of public signage, inscriptions, and various other texts 'in place'. The predominant focus of linguistic landscape studies to date has been on multilingual usage on commercial and place-name signs in urban areas (see Jaworski and Yeung [2010, in press]), on residential signage). One of the most popular approaches contrasts the presence and absence of different languages in 'official' and 'non-official' signs. For example, Backhaus (2006 citing Calvet, 1990, 1994; and Rosenbaum et al., 1977) suggests that the diversity of languages is greater on 'non-official'/'private' signs, in contrast to the more conservative, less plurilingual 'official' or 'government' signs. Backhaus makes a similar observation about his data collected in Tokyo: official multilingual signs are dominated by the use of Japanese with a considerable presence of English and a relatively low presence of Chinese and Korean, which he interprets as the manifestation of the state-induced, linguistic hegemony with a nod to a small number of linguistic minorities. The non-official multilingual signs in Tokyo display a wider array of languages (predominantly English), which Backhaus interprets as an expression of the sign-makers' solidarity with the foreign language community, and more generally with the Western (predominantly Anglo-American) cultural values and internationalism. These symbolic displays of English (and to a lesser degree other languages) are contrasted with the use of Korean in non-official signs, which is said to index the presence of a Korean minority living and working in a particular area of the city.

Along these lines, Eliezer Ben-Rafael and his colleagues (2006; see also 2004) examine Israel's linguistic landscape which they define as 'linguistic objects that mark the public space' (p. 7). They focus on the use of the three main languages of Israel: Hebrew, Arabic and English in predominantly Jewish, Israeli-Palestinian and non-Israeli Palestinian (East Jerusalem) areas. The theoretical backdrop to this study is the claim that the forces of modernity,

globalization and multiculturalism create new personal, social and professional identities and relations in neighbourhoods and cities, and between public authority and civil society, all of which contribute to the reshaping of urban linguistic landscapes. Ben-Rafael et al. align themselves with Henri Lefebvre's (1991) notion of 'spatial practice' (see above) and the need to examine individual motivations and social circumstances for the way physical-geographical spaces are shaped. They also draw on Pierre Bourdieu's (1983, 1993) idea of different autonomous but interconnected 'fields' being structured by unequal power relations exemplified in the context of linguistic landscapes through the privileging of some codes over others. From Erving Goffman (1963, 1981), they then borrow the notion of the (linguistic) presentation of Self, and argue that the linguistic choices made on public signage are indicative of their producers' identities. Finally, following Raymond Boudon (1990), and in the spirit of Goffman, Ben-Rafael and his colleagues argue that the goal-oriented actions of social actors are based on their consideration of various options, and that these considerations motivate sign producers to create particular effects in their intended recipients; the idea known in sociolinguistics as 'audience design' (Bell, 1997).

Ben-Rafael et al. find the use and spread of the three languages reflecting, and maybe constituting, the complex power and allegiance relations within contemporary, urban Israeli society. The linguistic landscape of the Jewish areas is thus characterized by the dominance of Hebrew, the significant presence of English and only minimal Arabic. Israeli-Palestinian areas meanwhile are dominated by Arabic with significant use of Hebrew and insignificant use of English. Finally, non-Israeli-Palestinian areas are dominated by Arabic with significant presence of English and negligible Hebrew. Thus, while both Palestinian groups seem to construe themselves as predominantly and ethnolinguistically Arabic, they diverge in their orientation to their national identities; where the former leans towards the state of Israel, the other diverges from it and towards a more pan-Arabic, international or global position. Ben-Rafael et al. orient also to the privately vs. publicly motivated signs distinguishing between 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' flows of linguistic landscape elements. Not unlike in other localities (cf. Backhaus' study of Tokyo mentioned above), the private/bottom-up signs may display a greater variation of languages beyond those recognized officially. For example, in a number of Israeli Jewish areas populated by significant numbers of recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union, relatively frequent displays of Russian on private signs (but ignored on the official ones) index these communities. Private signs may also be a site of linguistic opposition and resistance to the official, bureaucratic language choice norms through omission. In the non-Israeli-Palestinian area of East Jerusalem, Hebrew does not feature at all in the bottom-up signs in contrast to the common trilingual (Arabic-English-Hebrew) displays of the top-down signs.

Other studies have found similar correlations between the use of specific languages and class, ethnicity or nationality. For example, with regard to urban

Bangladesh, Banu and Sussex (2001: 53) note the prevalence of English in 'shopping-cum-residential areas which are largely populated by middle-class and upper-middle-class educated Bengalis'. A similar role for English as a symbolic resource and marker of modernity, internationalism, globalization, 'high class', and so on, is found in the linguistic landscape of advertising (on billboards and in print media) documented by many (cf. Haarman, 1989; Cheshire and Moser, 1994; Piller, 2001; Friedrich, 2002; Thurlow and Jaworski, 2003; Kelly-Holmes, 2005).

The collection of studies on linguistic landscapes published in Gorter (2006a; reprinted as Gorter 2006b), some of which have been mentioned above, come with the subtitle 'A new approach to multilingualism' and position themselves as direct descendants of the Landry and Bourhis' view of linguistic landscapes cited above (see Gorter, 2006c). The novelty of their approach is most clearly seen in the use of site-specific data rather than questionnaire data, foregrounding the national (local) and international (global) orientation of the signs (predominantly through the presence or absence of English and other languages not indigenous to the area) (cf. Ben-Rafael et al., 2004, 2006; Backhaus, 2006, 2007; Cenoz and Gorter, 2006; Huebner, 2006; MacGregor, 2003; McArthur, 2000; Schlick, 2002). In this regard, all the contributions in our volume have likewise committed themselves to the analysis or discussion of situated text-space relationships in terms of their contexts of emplacement (or use). However, our goal in putting together *Semiotic Landscapes*, alongside a number of other, recent studies of linguistic landscapes, is to move on from the predominantly survey-based, quantitative approaches (cf. our reference above to Duncan and Ley's 1993 critique of mimetic 'descriptive fieldwork' in traditional geography) and also to complicate some of the taken-for-granted dichotomies in favour of more nuanced, genre- and context-specific analyses of language in 'landscape texts' (cf. Coupland, 2008). Jeffrey Kallen (2008) too is sceptical about any simplistic operationalizing of emplaced language as either 'top-down' or 'bottom-up', which conceals the actual effectiveness and power of the government-originated or 'official' signage, and the status of 'private' signs. 'A sign in a local shopkeeper's window . . . is not symmetrically "bottom-up": there is no necessary intention for the shopkeeper to communicate upwards to any governmental agent or agency. In terms of state authority, signs of this kind – being addressed to other private citizens – are best described as horizontal' (Kallen, 2008: 273). Instead, Kallen advocates Scollon and Wong Scollon's (2003) approach of sign emplacement and interpretation, social actors' motivations and communicative intents, and the indexicality of signs, i.e. 'the semiotic property of pointing to other things' (Kallen, 2008). Kallen examines the Irish linguistic landscape in the context of tourism, where language is part of the ideological work centred around the issues of authenticity of the tourist experience, security of tourist movement, tourist play, and memorability of the tourist experience. Thom Huebner (2008) advocates the study of 'artifacts' found in linguistic landscapes in terms of genre labels assigned to them by the local communities claiming their ownership, and

in consideration of the immediate context of their emplacement (rather than relying on the broad categorization such as 'shopping district'). Huebner also places the study of linguistic landscape within the broader framework of the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1972) dispelling the somewhat grandiose and misguided idea of treating 'linguistic landscapes' as a new *discipline*. Rather, Huebner argues, language in landscape provides 'an often overlooked source of data for the analysis of language in society' (2008: 71), and illustrates how Dell Hymes' SPEAKING mnemonic of the components of the speech event (setting or scene; participants; ends or goals; act sequences; key; instrumentalities; norms; and genre) is applicable to their study as a descriptive framework (see also Coupland's discussion in this volume of Welsh linguistic landscapes in terms of 'core/periphery' and 'from above/from below').

In this same vein, the implicit or hidden ideological positions of emplaced texts are explored in David Malinowski's (2008) multimodal analysis of signs on ethnic Korean business in Oakland, California (shopping centre, restaurants, gift shop) in parallel with the examination of interviews with the sign-owners, designers, clients (sign 'consumers'), as well as various media (newspaper and internet) comments on code and design choices, and the 'meaning' of signs (a version of a 'language ideological debate'). In the course of his study, Malinowski unravels a complex web of interaction between the form and materiality of the signs, their spatial position, relation to other signs, and the personal histories and motivations of individuals involved in the 'interpretation' of the sign. The emergent meaning of these commercial signs which frequently exceeds the 'intended' meaning of their authors is accounted for in terms of Judith Butler's (1997) notion of the performative (and transformative) nature of speech as embodied action, escaping the speaker's control and exceeding the propositional content of what is said. Thus, Malinowski nicely demonstrates the importance of a multi-faceted, in-depth ethnographic approach in the study of language and/in landscape in order to avoid the misleading one-sidedness of textual interpretation resulting from the researcher's own reading of his or her data (see Reh, 2004; Pennycook, 2008).

The ideologies of semiotic landscapes

Most studies of displayed language to date orient to globalization as a key underlying concept behind much ongoing change in the linguistic/semiotic landscapes. For example, in a sociolinguistic variationist study of the linguistic landscape in the Mexican border-city of Reynosa, Tamaulipas (bordering with McAllen, Texas), Glenn Martínez (2005) demonstrates how commercial signs show degrees of lexical borrowing from English to Spanish alongside certain syntactic and morphological innovations (e.g. compounding pattern modelled on the English where the head is on the right-hand side, the so-called 'head-last' construction, e.g. *Colorflex Pinturas, Duratex Uniformes, Foly Muebles*). Martínez

notes how, other things being equal, morphological innovation in Reynosa's linguistic landscape seems socially salient (even more so than the choice of English words in the commercial signs he studied) in that innovative morphological patterns display a sharp socio-economic stratification: new morphological patterns appear on professional (affluent) signs rather than hand-painted ones, and in predominantly middle class (rather than working class) serving areas. This linguistic change in business names in Reynosa may be attributed to the spread of global consumerism since most linguistic/textual innovation is found to be highly localized in the areas where more affluent consumers live and where capital intense businesses tend to cluster. Following Friedman (2002), Martínez considers an explicit connection between consumption and self-identification, suggesting that:

as the city becomes more diversified in the face of globalization processes such as mobile labor from the south, itinerant capital from the north, and roving commodities from all around, residents are continuously finding new and creative ways of self-identification. One way is through the social practices of global consumption. Innovative morphological patterning, in this way, comes to be a symbol of membership not so much in a global community of consumers uniting both sides of the border in greater ties of interdependence but rather in a local team of residents differentiating themselves from newcomers and staking their claim to specific geographic sites within the city. (Martínez, 2005: 114)

In a study of the changing commercial signage in St. Petersburg in the post-Soviet era (in the 1990s), Yurchak (2000) demonstrates how the new class of Russian entrepreneurs mark and symbolically enact (again, in the sense of Judith Butler's 1997 notion of performativity and creativity – subjects 'breaking' into new utterances) a shift from the Soviet centralized economy to the globalized, market-driven economy suffused with Western values. 'By inventing new names for privately owned public places their owners are *privatizing* public space not only legally (as legitimate owners) but also symbolically (as the authors and masters of the new meaning of this space) (Yurchak, 2000: 407; see also Gendelman and Aiello, this volume; Chmielewska, this volume).

As Yurchak also demonstrates, the creativity of the linguistic forms on commercial signs in 'new' Russia is a result of their authors and owners 'importing' English and other Western styles, phonetic combinations, letter fonts, morphological shapes, etc., and combining them with the 'local' (Russian) language forms. This linguistic intertextuality creates rupture in the traditional sociolinguistic panorama of Russian cities (not unlike performance artists' linguistic interventions in public spaces, see below), while at the same time presenting their authors and owners as the masters of social change. This is also how we see a 'global semioscape' (Thurlow and Aiello, 2007; cf. Appadurai, 1990, 1996) being manifested and produced – the informal 'flow' of symbolic

material, textual practices and aesthetic values. The 'imported' cultural and language forms do not, however, remain unchanged; instead, they 'often become comprehensively and unpredictably reinterpreted and re-customized to serve very particular local purposes' (Yurchak, 2000: 412; see Malinowski, 2008, cited above; Pennycook, this volume).

A similar point on the interpretation and reinterpretation of language (and other semiotic) forms that become part of the global 'flows' is asserted by Jan Blommaert:

Whenever discourses travel across the globe, what is carried with them is their shape, but their value, meaning, or function do not travel along. Value, meaning, and function are a matter of uptake, they have to be granted by others on the basis of the prevailing orders of indexicality, and increasingly also on the basis of their real or potential 'market value' as a cultural commodity. (Blommaert, 2005: 72)

However, as globalization has been theorized, among other issues, in terms of the increased economic inequalities (e.g. Bauman, 1998; Giddens, 1990, 2000; Harvey, 2006), Blommaert also draws our attention to the inequalities resulting from the flow of styles, genres and codes across the places of global inequality:

This world system, as Immanuel Wallerstein has extensively argued, is a system built on inequality, on particular, asymmetric divisions of labor between 'core regions' and 'peripheries', with 'semiperipheries' in between . . . Inequality, not uniformity, organizes the flows and the particular nature of such flows across the 'globe'. Consequently, whenever sociolinguistic items travel across the globe, they travel across structurally different spaces, and will consequently be picked up differently in different places. (Blommaert, 2003: 612)

In our own study of linguistic landscapes in Gambian tourist spaces (in Thurlow and Jaworski, 2010), we examine the names on Gambian souvenir market-stall signs appropriating internationally known names of London/British department stores and international supermarket chains such as 'Harrods', 'Selfridges', 'Liberty', 'John Lewis' and 'Safeway' (see Lanza and Woldemariam, 2008 on similar 'borrowing' of McDonald's and Starbucks logos in Mekele, Ethiopia). As examples of what we call 'discourses on the move', the recontextualization of these prestigious, dominant, hegemonic Western brand names in the economically and linguistically under-resourced social domain of a poor African country inevitably brings about changes to their value and status. Rather than indexing affluent retail outlets, their denotative meaning is reduced to single, small, often poorly constructed stalls selling relatively cheap (for the tourists) souvenirs. Rather than highly prestigious, these names act as familiar and parodic, if humorous and strategically effective, signifiers of a new and 'exotic' space experienced by the largely British tourists. Although the vendors

may use the symbolic value of these signs connoting wealth, glamour and internationalism to style (Cameron, 2000; Coupland, 2007) themselves as citizens of the globalized world, the signs' materiality (wooden planks, torn out pieces of cardboard, rusting metal sheets and so on), and their DIY-like execution (uneven lettering, inaccurate copying of the original signs, spelling 'mistakes', and so on), make them unmistakably examples of 'grassroots literacy' (Blommaert, 2005; Juffermans, 2008) rather than elite commercial displays. The appropriated brand names become part of the imagery of international tourism, which depend on the construction of myths and fantasies for the consumption of fleeting masses of tourists. Like copies of the iconic buildings and monuments in Disneyland or Las Vegas, in the act of intertextual play (Bauman, 2004), these commercial signs become backdrops to tourist playgrounds which are quite alien to the identities and practices of the host community and set apart from their 'ordinary' world (Crick, 1989; Shaw and Williams, 2004). At the same time, strategically these signs ease tourists' need to organize their gaze around well-defined and well-recognizable markers of space (Culler, 1988; MacCannell, 1989; Rojek and Urry, 1997; Urry, 2002). It is thus, not only space-as-place which resemiotizes these particular textual practices but also their movement across space, their mobility.

In reviewing the literature on linguistic landscapes and the semiotics of space, it is noticeable how most studies draw their data from urban spaces (although see McCarthy, 2008 on 'globalizing the countryside'). It is indeed the rise of the industrial age, or the modern era, which led to the sudden growth of cities with their architectural functionalism and aesthetic subservient to the capitalist project of the production and accumulation of capital (Harvey, 1989). Especially in industrial and post-industrial urban contexts the self-conscious, strategic production of space reveals itself. Thus, while the work of Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003) and other authors mentioned already provides an important point of entry for sociolinguistics and discourse analysis, most contributors in this volume are concerned to engage more squarely with social theory and with the political-economies which shape the semiotic landscapes they discuss. Either explicitly or implicitly, this perspective is indebted to the likes of David Harvey who, for example, argues:

when the landscape shaped in relation to a certain phase of development (capitalist or pre-capitalist) becomes a barrier to further accumulation . . . the geographical configuration of places must then be reshaped around new transport and communications systems and physical infrastructures, new centers and styles of production and consumption, new agglomerations of labor power, and modified social infrastructures (including, for example, systems of governance and regulation of places). Old places . . . have to be devalued, destroyed, and redeveloped while new places are created. The cathedral city becomes a heritage center, the mining community becomes a ghost town, the old industrial center is deindustrialized, speculative boom

towns or gentrified neighbourhoods arise on the frontiers of capitalist development or out of the ashes of deindustrialized communities. The history of capitalism is, then, punctuated by intense phases of spatial reorganization. (1996: 296)

This invention and reinvention of places is an intensely complex social process, which includes but, according to Harvey, does not necessarily privilege language and discourse. Rather, in Harvey's view, the social process of place-making is marked by six 'moments' or 'activities' operating simultaneously at any given point in time and remaining in a dialectic relationship with one another: language/discourse; beliefs/values/desires; institutions/rituals; material practices; social relations; power (cf. Harvey, 1996: 78–79). Here is Harvey again:

Places are constructed and experienced as material ecological artefacts and intricate networks of social relations. They are the focus of the imaginary, of beliefs, longings, and desires (most particularly with respect to the psychological pull and push of the idea of 'home'). They are an intense focus of discursive activity, filled with symbolic and representational meanings, and they are a distinctive product of institutionalized social and economic power. The dialectical interplay across these different moments of the social process . . . is intricate and confusing. But it is precisely the way in which all these moments are caught up in the common flow of the social process that in the end determines the conflictual (and oftentimes internally contradictory) process of place construction, sustenance, and deconstruction. (Harvey, 1996: 316)

Although to us Harvey's 'activities' of urban regeneration and change can be largely conceived of as forms of linguistic or discursive social practice (see Gendelman and Aiello, this volume), his framework does offer a useful heuristic for theorizing place-making. A demonstration of the connections between Harvey's different 'moments' in the construction of place, especially between the linguistic and material practices of architecture, is Thomas Markus and Deborah Cameron's (2002) study of how texts and images influence the 'meaning' of built environment, with all its consequences for our perception, interpretation, use and construction (or not) of buildings. Markus and Cameron treat buildings as 'social objects' (p. 3) and discuss them as sites (re)producing particular social values (e.g. 'privacy' vs. 'community'), relations (e.g. dominant power structures), and encouraging particular types of activities and social encounters (the latter being also discussed by Scollon and Wong Scollon, 2003 with reference to Erving Goffman's 1971 interaction order and E. T. Hall's 1966 proxemics).

Echoing the sentiments of Kress and van Leeuwen quoted at the start of this chapter, Markus and Cameron argue that '[b]uildings themselves are not representations' (p. 15), but ways of organizing space for their users; in other words, the way buildings are used and the way people using them relate to one

another, is largely dependent on the spoken, written and pictorial texts about these buildings. The architect's categorization of space within a building in the blueprint or manifesto, the investor's brief for the architect, the journalist's review of a building, or a tourist brochure about the building are among the many types of texts which may give aesthetic (e.g. press review) or historical (e.g. guidebook description) value to a building, impose and sanction power relations between its users (e.g. advising which spaces may be accessible to whom), or designate some spaces as 'communal' vs. 'private' (e.g. regulating patterns of behaviour). Of course, all of these discourses and functional uses of buildings are subject to contestation and subversion; however, it is only through the production of new, competing texts that architectural spaces may gain new meaning for their users (see Jones, this volume, on the 're-shaping' of home and classroom spaces by personal computers). Some of the texts about buildings may be invisible to most of their users, as is usually the case with descriptions in blueprints, correspondence between architects, developers, town planners and engineering consultants, etc; some texts, such as specialist and more popular, journalistic articles may be available publicly; while other texts may in fact be part of the architectural design of the building, or a part added to the building's environment. These may range from brief and functional labels on doors such as 'seminar room' or 'debating chamber', to more or less elaborate texts, for example, regulating the flow of people in case of emergencies, or museum plans for visitors. Other texts may be more symbolic, commemorative or aestheticizing, for example Latin inscriptions on government buildings, plaques commemorating the laying of foundation stones, postcards with the image of the building available in its souvenir shop, and so on. Architecture and language (spoken and written) may then form an even more complex, multilayered landscape (or cityscape) combining built environment, writing, images, as well as other semiotic modes, such as speech, music, photography, and movement (cf. Eco, 2003 [1973], and, in this volume, chapters by Abousnougua and Machin; Shohamy and Waksman; Gendelman and Aiello; Chmielewska).

One linguistic genre that has extensively connected the study of language, discourse and built environment is graffiti. In discourse analysis, graffiti has long been recognized as a literary genre (Blume, 1985). In literacy studies, alongside other public displays of language, such as home-made banners commemorating birthdays, anniversaries or engagements, placards advertising local events, jumble or yard sales, advertisements in shop windows, and so on, graffiti has been included in the 'visual literacy environment' (Barton and Hamilton, 1998: 40), which is indicative of a community's vernacular literacy practices. Lynn and Lea (2005: 41) offer the following taxonomy of the main graffiti sub-genres: 'art' (including 'gang' and 'hip-hop'), 'slogans' (or 'public' graffiti), and 'latrinalia' (or 'private' graffiti). All can be offensive in their content promulgating racist, sexist or homophobic sentiments, although some, like hip-hop art graffiti (see Pennycook, this volume), despite their political meaning, tend to veer towards the manifestation of a certain aesthetic rather

than focusing simply on linguistically encoded ideational messages (although see below for a conflated view of the political nature of aesthetics).

One of the reasons why graffiti may have received more scholarly attention than any other form of public visual discourse is that, as is argued by Lynn and Lea (2005), other forms of writing or signage have largely undergone the process of ‘automatization’ (Halliday, 1982). This means that ‘the foregrounding of one [semiotic] is often accompanied (or achieved) by the backgrounding or “automatization” of other semiotics, to the point where they appear so normal and natural as to become “invisible”’ (Iedema, 2003: 40, cited by Lynn and Lea, 2005: 43). Graffiti, on the other hand, as a largely outlawed art form, is often perceived by many as ‘out-of-place’, as iconoclastic in its content and style, and as creating a more immediate, direct form of engagement with the viewer. Consistent with the geosemiotic approach of Scollon and Wong Scollon cited above, Lynn and Lea note that the actual location, time of creation, and authorship of graffiti are as important for their interpretation as is their form and content.

In terms of the text–space relation, one of the central concerns of our current volume, the presence of graffiti in urban landscape has provided rich material for the study of the linguistic and discursive marking of the spatial identity of groups, or territoriality, turf hostilities, and other sorts of intergroup – racial or class – tensions. For example, singling hip-hop graffiti out of several other sub-genres (e.g. ‘gang’, ‘neo-Nazi’, or ‘racial’), Jeff Ferrell (1993) echoes Hebdige’s (1979) theorizing of subculture and discusses the legal, political and mediatized aspects of graffiti production and reception in Denver, Colorado. Ferrell argues that the ‘battle’ over graffiti is one over style, and consequently, the right to assert and give voice to one’s identity.

Legal or illegal, in the interest of preventing AIDS or promoting the reputation of a local crew, graffiti style disrupts the aesthetic of authority. It intrudes on the controlled ‘beauty’ of ordered environments, and compels those invested in these environments to respond to it as an ugly threat to their aesthetic domination. Graffiti may lower the economic value of property, or intrude on the maintenance of city politics, but perhaps more importantly to those who control property and politics, it diminishes the sense of ordered style which accompanies them. . . . In the battle over graffiti – as in battle over ethnicity, generational identity, or workplace control – symbolism and style cannot be relegated to epiphenomena, to products or representations of the ‘real’ conflict. (Ferrell, 1993: 184)

Ferrell’s approach brings home a significant premise underlying all the chapters in this volume, namely that spatial and social ‘realities’ do not simply precede linguistic/discursive/semiotic practices; they are always co-equivalent and co-constituted (see Lefebvre, 1991, and others above).

Of course, graffiti is never limited to disempowered urbanites 'reclaiming the streets', buildings and other public spaces from the authorities, the affluent establishment; nor does it always attract the same amount of attention from officials. Lynn and Lea (2005) set out to study 'racist' graffiti in areas of Glasgow noted for their large population of asylum seekers. They report that overt racist graffiti is very rare ('conspicuous by its absence' p. 46), which may be partly due to the efficiency of the local authorities in removing them, or partly due to the changing tactics of the local racist youth gangs, spraying the bridges, paths, and walls of the estate with their 'tag' only, which to those who 'know the code' (p. 56) still sends an intimidating, racist message. Needless to say, Lynn and Lea found that *covertly* racist graffiti are removed by the authorities far less swiftly and efficiently than the overtly racist messages.

Nor is graffiti always directed 'outwardly' to intimidate out-group members or to (re)claim territory. Adams and Winter's (1997) study of gang graffiti in Phoenix, Arizona demonstrates that gang graffiti, apart from turf claiming and marking, is also used for individual gang members to advertise themselves as *respectable* gang members, to create allegiances within and across gangs, and more generally to create and demarcate social structures and hierarchies within gangs. Antagonistic exchanges between gangs are one of the means to assert power and superiority (alongside physical violence, for example), and they create patterns of allegiance and rivalry. Alongside code-switching, vernacular spellings, and displayed orientation to one's own gang and its way of life, these texts, Adams and Winter argue, are powerful assertions of gang members' ethnic and cultural identity, as well as status otherwise denied to them by the social and institutional structures.

To label all graffiti as 'transgressive' or 'illegal' is an oversimplification (see also Pennycook, this volume). As the above quote from Jeff Ferrell indicates, in a situation of conflict, what constitutes a violation of rights for one party, may be an affirming and legitimate reclamation of voice (and space) for another, and it can be an important literacy/identity resource as '[I]earning to read the multimodal tags and grafs (graffiti) of urban landscapes . . . is one part of a broader multimodal engagement of the hip-hop world (Pennycook, 2007: 10; see also Adams and Winter, 1997 quoted below). Graffiti can only be transgressive if one privileges the hegemonic order as the 'legitimate' order. This is something that the British graffiti artist Banksy certainly does not do, recognizing that the ideologies and political economies of space are far less easily resolved. In the introduction to a book chronicling his graffiti images and quotations, Banksy delegitimizes big business' advertisements on billboards. It's these companies, he claims, that have started the fight by defacing 'our neighbourhoods', and it's the 'vandals' who claim them back and make the world a better looking place (cf. Ferrell quoted above). In Banksy's words:

The people who run our cities don't understand graffiti because they think nothing has the right to exist unless it makes a profit. But if you just value

money then your opinion is worthless. . . . The people who truly deface our neighbourhoods are the companies that scrawl their giant slogans across buildings and buses trying to make us feel inadequate unless we buy their stuff. They expect to be able to shout their message in your face from every available surface but you're never allowed to answer back. (Banksy, 2004: 8)

Just as space is no longer experientially or epistemologically bounded, the meanings of emplaced texts are always beyond the control of an individual author, designer, speaker or artist (cf. Gastman, et al., 2007; Große, 2008; Lewishon, 2008; Manco, 2002; and many others). These meanings are also under the constant and rapaciously commodifying sway of post-industrial capital. It is, for example, somewhat ironic – but true to form – that Banksy, like Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring before him, and more recently the French artist JR, has now crossed over from the self-proclaimed position of the egalitarian ‘vandal’ to the mainstream ‘artist’ where his works sell for vast amounts of money and are to be found adorning walls in elite galleries and private collections. Spaces of exclusion have now opened up; the outsider has come inside.

This book’s landscape

The arrangement of chapters in this book should reveal a progression of themes, data and methodologies touched upon in this introductory chapter so far. As is usually the case, the boundaries between individual approaches are not clear-cut, so we decided to abstain from arranging the chapters into separate sections.

The first four chapters by Kallen, Sebba, Coupland and Dray engage predominantly with visible language/writing as a form of social, situated practice. These authors orient to the sociolinguistic tradition of work known as ‘linguistic landscapes’ (see above), yet their problematization and critique of language displays offers novel ways for understating the relationship between language and space, different linguistic texts visible in the ‘same’ spaces, and issues of policy and ideology.

Jeff Kallen’s chapter on the displayed languages in contemporary Dublin caught in the flux of globalization, challenges the traditional conceptualization of ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ signage as ideologically viable. Although they can be found occupying a single visual field, linguistic signs indexing different domains, institutions and activities are typically ‘read’ as belonging to different interpretive frames (Goffman, 1974), as they are typically not meant to be hierarchically embedded one within another. This may also apply to graffiti, which is often deliberately placed *outside* of other dominant texts (or frames), for example on railway bridges, abandoned warehouses, or backstreets. Although certainly some graffiti may be seen as ‘parasitic’ on other texts and spaces (and ‘transgressive’ in the narrow sense), its embedding in

urban spaces can also be seen as creating new experienced spaces without breaking up the global conceived space of the city (cf. Lefebvre, 1991). Thus, Kallen's approach informed by frame analysis offers a possible resolution to the methodological quandary for isolating 'units of analysis' in linguistic landscapes research, and an analytic tool for analysing emplaced inscriptions in semiotically diverse spaces (cf. Scollon and Wong Scollon's 'semiotic aggregates', Blommaert's *simultaneous layering* of indexicalities and contexts). Frame analysis, together with Jones' notion of *sites of attention/engagement*, resonates with earlier conceptualizations of (urban) spaces as texts whose reading is located somewhere between the spatial action of walking and the signifying practice of toponyms, triggering the emergence in the passer-by of the city's symbolic landscapes (de Certeau, 1984; see also Pennycook, 2008). Barthes (1994: 191) likewise asserts that 'human space (and not only urban space) has always been a signifying space', and invokes the work of Kevin Lynch, an urban planner, whose work aimed to operationalize the way urban spaces are perceived and organized into their users' mental maps. Lynch (1960) proposed a 'vocabulary of signification' (Barthes, 1994: 191) which includes five discrete units: *paths*, along which people travel such as streets, pavements, stairs, escalators; *edges*, which are perceived as boundaries, e.g. walls, enclosures, dead-ends, river banks; *districts*, distinguishable sections of the city with a specific identity or character; *nodes*, or intersections understood to be some focal points; and *landmarks*, readily identifiable objects serving as reference points. In a corresponding manner, Kallen's frames (or zones) include: the *civic frame*, the *marketplace*, *portals*, the *wall* and the *debris zone*. As Kallen observes, this list is not exhaustive with other possible categories to include the *community*, the *school*, and so on.

Mark Sebba examines data from two sites: the Isle of Man and apartheid South Africa. One of his focal interests is the idea of a wide array of mobile public texts, such as newspapers, T-shirts, books, banknotes, stamps and bus tickets. These circulate in large volumes and hence are 'read' by many people on a daily basis even though their familiarity means that users may give them little more than a glance. Again, we are faced here with the issue of 'attention' and 'engagement', i.e. the extent and manner to which these frequently esoteric texts signify, how they are 'read' by consumers and onlookers, and what makes them noticeable beyond 'merely' providing part of the street's background (e.g. newspapers displayed for sale), or 'purely' utilitarian value (e.g. bus tickets bought from the driver and inserted into one's pocket with the change, without looking). Sebba also discusses some ideological and socio-historical aspects of the use of various languages in public documents, objects and displays, such as different design features aiming at the 'equal' representation of English and Afrikaans, two languages of the dominant White minority in apartheid South Africa, to the complete exclusion or erasure of the indigenous languages of the Black majority. He also discusses how public uses of written Manx in the Isle of Man have become largely relegated to symbolic and ceremonial displays (cf. Bishop et al., 2005), as part of creating an aestheticized (using

traditional Celtic font) and ‘exotic’ *linguascape* for tourists (cf. Jaworski et al., 2003); here, language serves as another symbolic resource in creating ‘the society of spectacle’ (see above).

Nik Coupland’s chapter on the politics of displayed bilingualism in Wales takes as a starting point Barbara Adam’s (1998) idea that visible features of landscape in the natural world are often shaped by invisible or hidden forces, human or non-human, such as land erosion created by winds or tides. In the case of linguistic landscapes, such ‘invisible constitutive activities’ are certainly brought about by human activity and are profoundly ideological, encapsulating social actors’ priorities and competing value systems. Coupland discusses a wide range of data such as place-names found on road signs, public documents, commercial signs and T-shirt texts. What the chapter demonstrates is that despite the rigidity and prescriptivism of key governmental institutions such as Bwrdd Yr Iaith (The Welsh Language Board) in their bilingual language policy insisting on absolute language parallelism there is much variation, creativity and blending of the two languages, escaping the easy ‘parallelism’ formula. (Coupland points out that the policy of parallelism is itself rooted in the standard language ideology as is well-documented in sociolinguistics.) This chapter then may be read as a warning against an unproblematic reading of bi- and multi-lingual signs as ‘parallel’ in many quantitatively oriented studies without recourse to the underlying politics of language planning, phonological, syntactic and orthographic analysis of displayed texts, visual design, historical contextualization, and attention to linguistic creativity and innovation.

Susan Dray continues the theme of ideological significance of public signage with reference to the use of English considered to be the ‘standard’ variety with a highly codified orthography and enjoying its high status as a written language, and Jamaican Creole (Patois) – spoken by a majority of Jamaicans but with little prestige, no codified orthography, and commonly assumed not to be used for any form of writing at all. Yet, Dray’s data provide a rich source of examples in which Creole *is* used on customer notices, fly posters, advertisements, and bus logos for clearly strategic purposes, such as managing interpersonal relations between business owners and clients, and regulating behaviour in service encounters. Some uses of written Creole are typical of the identities of their authors/owners aligning themselves with local values and manifesting their allegiance with local culture. Interestingly, such accommodating practices may also be found on commercial signs produced by transnational companies (e.g. KFC) seemingly converging towards their potential Creole customers. Generally, the ecology of public signage runs against the official policy of the Government denying Creole the status of an official, written language. Whether monolingual, bilingual or diglossic, signs incorporate Creole as a vibrant and creative resource, for example to express and promote political beliefs, or for marketing purposes. From a methodological standpoint, Dray’s chapter demonstrates the value of combining quantitative, survey-type analysis with a detailed qualitative ethnographic and semiotic analysis, which allows her to

make important between the genre or text types in public signage and their content, style, materiality and participation frameworks involved in their production and consumption.

Ingrid Piller explores the semiotic processes underlying the gendering and sexualization of urban space in the context of the tourist-oriented sex industry in Basel. Drawing on data sources ranging from overtly public, such as billboards, shop fronts and advertisements in local newspapers, to less publicly displayed but publicly accessible such as prostitutes', nightclubs' and escort agencies' websites, and clients' blogs, Piller demonstrates how Basel's *travel spaces* (cf. Lynch's *paths*; Kallen's *portals*) are permeated by commercially driven sexual imagery. However, in order to negotiate the high-class, clean image of Switzerland as a business/tourist destination, the sex industry likewise positions itself as 'high class' and 'clean'. To this end, Piller argues, consistent with the late modern, globalist shift to information-based economies and the commodification of language, the Swiss sex trade is largely redefined as 'communication' drawing on the multilingualism and good educational background of its international prostitutes as 'excellent conversationalists'. The relatively recent phenomenon of the sex industry branding itself as 'conversational' is underscored by more traditional urban spaces, where sex was part of the trade. For example, McDonogh (2003) makes the following observation about 'prostitution bars' in his study of the *barrio chino* (Raval) area of Barcelona:

Hours of these bars resembled those of the spectacle bars, built around night-time activities, although some opened from early morning onwards. All specialized in overpriced liquor; these were never places of conversation or group sociability. Outside working hours, when prostitutes would relax, they themselves would go to neighborhood bars instead. (McDonogh, 2003: 273)

In our next chapter, Alastair Pennycook considers another genre of publicly displayed texts found in urban travel spaces – graffiti, or graffscapes – part of the urban landscape that is both toured and touring, constituting alternative ways of imagining and narrating the city ('the living *visage*') in contrast to the sanitized image ('the buffed *paysage*') offered for tourist consumption by the hegemonic marketing institutions. The social significance of graffscapes lies in their performative transformations of middle-class, public spaces into contact and contest zones, the aesthetics of class identity and struggle, sense-making and control over space, local and global identities, and local and global styles of giving voice. These are just some of the themes explored by Pennycook, and it is important to bear in mind that semiotic landscapes are not shaped solely through the commercial exploits of space but also by artists' interventions in and representations of public spaces (see above), alongside other grass roots initiatives, interests and priorities (see also Coupland, this volume; Dray, this volume; Modan, 2007).

Rodney Jones adds another layer of theorizing space in relation to language and communication that has come about with the metaphorization of the internet as 'space' (cyberspace), and computer mediated communication (CMC) as taking place *in cyberspace* (Hunter, 2003 discusses the legal implication of this linguistic fact). However, as Jones (also 2005) demonstrates, virtual spaces do not 'exist' independent of physical spaces, and *vice versa*. In fact, social actors engaging in CMC mobilize and orient to several interdependent spaces with all their affordances and constraints at any one time. Jones invokes here Jan Blommaert's (2005) notion of 'layered simultaneity' (see also Sloboda, 2008), and Ron Scollon's (2001) notion of the 'site of engagement', as 'those moments in time and points in space where mediated actions happen' (Jones, 2005: 141). These are the *physical spaces* (including *body spaces*) in which the social actors operate their computers; *virtual spaces* created by the computer interfaces; *relational spaces* created between the participants by the instance of communication; *screen spaces* as the locus of their visible act of communication; and *third spaces* which may be talked about but not inhabited by the participants at the moment of communication. As these sites of engagement tend to be necessarily very rich and complex socio-cultural environments, Jones argues that they are 'made not just of the physical spaces we inhabit and the timescales and trajectories that flow into them, but also, and more to the point, those aspects of space and time that we are inclined to *pay attention to*. We construct *sites of engagement* through our attention' (Jones, 2005: 152; this volume). In other words, we create and interpret sites of engagement by orienting to specific texts, images and other semiotic resources residing in the physical or virtual spaces; noticing and finding relevance of some such signs while ignoring or filtering out others (we use the notion of relevance here in the sense of Sperber and Wilson, 1986).

In his chapter, Thomas Mitchell confronts the idea of ideology of linguistic landscape *and* soundscape away from the principles of production to the media metadiscursive commentary (cf. Jaworski et al., 2004; Johnson and Ensslin, 2007) on the apparent spread of Spanish as indicative of the growing at best and menacing at worst Mexican inward migration to Pittsburgh's Beechview area. The confrontation of the press reports with the presence of written Spanish as displayed on commercial and community signage, and of spoken Spanish as experienced during an ethnographic 'walk-about' of Beechview's business corridor, suggests these reports to be largely exaggerated in their reporting of the magnitude of Mexican presence. Mitchell's chapter illustrates well the disjuncture between Lefebvre's experiential, representational and imagined spaces due to recontextualization and mediatization of aspects of a specific semiotic landscape.

In our own contribution to this volume, we return to Pennycook's focus on the production and legitimation of socially unequal and contested spaces; however, in this case we look at the diametrically opposite end of highly privileged, 'enclavic' spaces constructed (in their mediatized representations) through the absence of visible language: written inscriptions and spoken interactions. The chapter

undertakes a social semiotic analysis of magazine advertisements of elite (or super-elite) adopting 'silence' as the key metaphor for creating a sense of luxury, exclusivity and privilege. The exaggeration of silence in these promotional texts is not simply a matter of quietude. The absence in the data of people, of human interactions, of signage, etc. conforms well to the increasingly anti-communicational or anti-interactional ethos of super-elite mobility more generally (Thurlow and Jaworski, 2006). In this case, luxury is clearly predicated on being free of, or rather excluded from, both the 'babble' of local people and the 'drivel' of the masses. Travel and silence itself are thereby also reclassified in the process.

In this next chapter, Gill Abousnnouga and David Machin examine a sample of British war memorials from World War I to the present demonstrating how these ubiquitous yet silent and often unattended elements of urban and rural landscapes have been changing their shape to construct different discourses and legitimations of warfare, nationalism, heroism and sacrifice. Resting their analysis on several interdisciplinary areas such as Roland Barthes' semiotics, Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotics and design feature analysis (derived from Prague School's linguistic structuralism), Panofsky's iconology, and Critical Discourse Analysis, Abousnnouga and Machin relate the iconography (objects, persons and poses), and formal features (height, size, solidity and angularity) of the monuments to the expression of the dominant political and social ideologies in different historical periods, conflict of interest between the ruling and working classes, international relations, and the personal relationship between viewers and the monuments. Alongside several other chapters in this volume (especially Coupland; Pennycook; Thurlow and Jaworski; Shohamy and Waksman), this chapter touches on the moral dimension of the landscape, placing moral values, ethical considerations, justice, equality and power at the heart of much of geographical theorization of space (e.g. Tuan, 1989, 1993; Harvey, 1996; Smith, 2000; for the discussion of aesthetic, moral, social and political aspects of outdoor sculptures, including the significance of their emplacement, from an art historical perspective, see Gombrich, 1999).

Elana Shohamy and Shoshi Waksman continue the exploration of public monuments as part of the urban landscape. In their case study of the Tel Aviv *Ha'apala* memorial commemorating Jewish migration to Palestine between 1934 and 1948, they focus on its emplacement, architectural features, accompanying texts and photographs, and visitors' engagement with the site in order to reveal a range of competing narratives of migration. As in the chapter by Abousnnouga and Machin, these 'stories' are imbued with the invisible ideological forces surrounding the debates of nation building, ethnicity, suffering, memory and exclusion. Shohamy and Waksman make it also clear how the dominant discourses of the *Ha'apala* memorial in the changing moral and political landscape of contemporary Israel, caught up between the forces of global tourism and the ongoing Arab–Israeli war, categorize, segregate and silence other voices and narratives.

Irina Gendelman and Giorgia Aiello examine the postmodern semiotic landscape of several East European cities undergoing transition from centralized, state-run economies under communism to market-driven economies under globalization. Their discussion focuses on building façades in some of the most central, representative city locations and their incorporation into the process of globalization, commodification of heritage, and aestheticization of social life and commercial activities (Featherstone, 1991; cf. Debord's 1995 'society of the spectacle' below). As in several other chapters, the growth of tourism is cited as one of the factors in the ideological shift of the displayed imagery on the buildings' façades from communist propaganda to neoliberal capitalist icons of consumption. What appears to be common to both ideologies and the resulting practices is that each creates unequal subject positions among local populations, alienating the underprivileged groups through the oppressive centralization of state politics of the communist era, or the relentless drive to commercialization in market economy.

Ella Chmielewska brings the volume nicely to a close with a theoretical (re)interpretation of her empirical data of urban signage and the city as the site of a semiotic spectacle grounded in a broader framework of social theory and cultural criticism. Like Gendelman and Aiello, her broad, comparative sweep across several, international cities leads her to view the city's iconosphere as a resource for 'reading the city'. Chmielewska problematizes several key terms for a semiotic analysis of landscape: *em-/implacement*, *gazing/glancing*, *object/image*, and suggests that signs be treated as *topo-sensitive*, requiring multi-sensory reading and subject's immersion in their materiality. Chmielewska continues her discussion by examining the subjective readings and responses of an individual moving through more or less familiar semiotic landscapes. It is this 'literary' perspective on semiotic landscapes which leads us to make one more general observation before leaving our contributors to speak for themselves.

The art and politics of semiotic landscapes

We are reminded that the processes of semiotic inclusion/exclusion and translocation in our earlier discussion of Banksy's 'gentrification' cut both ways or, at least, follow more unpredictable pathways. In particular, we think here of writing and calligraphy which have always been such an important part of the visual arts, especially in the East Asian and Middle Eastern traditions, as well as in the West, especially under Modernity and Postmodernity (Clunas, 1997; Morley, 2003). For example, modern and contemporary artists in the West have either contributed to or borrowed heavily from the imagery of linguistic landscape around them. The late nineteenth century saw an explosion of 'billboard culture' in large cities of the industrialized 'West', in no small part shaped by the cultural and commercial poster designs by such artists as Jules

Chéret, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Pierre Bonnard. Consequently, paintings of urban scenes by Edouard Manet, Gustave Caillebotte, Jean Béraud, Roal Dufy in Paris, or John Sloan in New York incorporated and documented various manifestations of these new, public literacy practices (Morley, 2003). Modernism was an urban art (Bradbury and McFarlane, 1976), both residing in cities, orienting to the urban experience as well as shaping and exploiting its aesthetic (Harvey, 1989; see above). Art, as well as broadcast and print media (Mitchell, this volume), and film (Bleichenbacher, 2008) draw on the imagery of linguistic landscapes and feed their representations back to audiences, creating their ownscopic regimes and interpretations.

In the twentieth century, with art increasingly turning to the 'everyday' and 'mundane' for inspiration, writing gained in prominence as an artistic subject matter and medium – often indistinguishable. The affirmation of the ordinary and commonplace in the cubist art of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque took the form of collages using cut-outs from newspapers, advertisements, sheet music, wine labels and so on. After World War II, many European artists associated with such movements as Art Brut and Arte Povera (e.g. Jean Dubuffet, Antoni Tàpies) drew on the imagery and connotative meaning of graffiti art as a reaction to the established artistic genres or as political acts of resistance. The European 'Nouveau Réalistes' active in the late 1950s and early 1960s (e.g. Raymond Hains and Mino Rotella) made compositions from fragments of billboards and posters torn out from their original locations. In the 1960s, ordinary objects such as the Coca-Cola bottle, packaging for Brillo pads, Campbell soup cans, or Typhoo tea, all complete with their iconic shapes and logos, became the hallmarks of American and British pop-art. Jasper Johns' paintings of 'stencilled' alphabets and numbers became decontextualized, self-referential 'texts' with 'no meaning', and came to symbolize the depersonalized, industrial and militaristic aesthetic on the mid-twentieth century America. For Johns, such recontextualization of the anonymized yet familiar letters and numbers had subversive motivation and quality, because even though people may have known them, they had never seen them in the context of painting before (Morley, 2003).

In this way, artists bringing representations, recreations and reconfigurations of the urban (linguistic) landscape into art galleries – those typically decontextualized 'white cubes' – do not index any specific products, locations or communities. The Coca-Cola bottle and logo do not point to a place where Coca-Cola may be purchased or consumed; torn and reassembled, film posters do not advertise any particular cinema shows; 'graffiti' paintings do not unlawfully claim any specific walls; stencilled letters of the alphabet do not label any crates with military equipment. The viewers of these paintings and collages are not guided towards the consumption of the goods and services which used to be indexed by these texts before the act of recontextualization. Rather they become symbolic representations of the acts of consumption creating a particular vision of the world, iconizing and (de)legitimizing contemporary

consumer culture (see Machin and Jaworski, 2006: 363). By indexing specific *discourses* of industrialization, consumerism and globalization through recontextualized, self-referential posters, logos, letters, etc., the language in these 'text-paintings' becomes ideological in that it *connotes* the values of modernity and global capitalism rather than *denoting* particular objects, states or events. (Re)placing these mundane, profane texts in the frame of the sacred-like gallery space elevates them to the status of 'high art', while at the same time indexing the gallery space itself as a place of commerce, where symbols of consumerism become consumer objects commanding vast prices in their own right.

By the same token, and reversing yet again the direction of semiotic translocations, language-based art has also gone beyond galleries and into urban public spaces in the work of such artists as Jenny Holzer and Barbara Kruger, aiming to expand and reconfigure urban linguistic landscapes rather than 'simply' draw inspiration from them. For example, with their public displays of slogans, and agit-prop-style posters and billboards which appropriate the hegemonic discourses of state power, gender stereotyping and consumerism, Holzer and Kruger disrupt, fragment and confuse the spaces in which they occur, with the result of 'verbal anarchy in the street' (Foster, 1982: 88; quoted in Rose, 1995: 341). In this way, not unlike in the case of graffiti art, displayed language is deliberately used to create rupture and chaos, and to give new meaning to the space where it occurs.

Patrick Wright (1985: 237) notes that different worlds typically occupy the same localities, an observation echoed in Mac Giolla Chríost's (2007) discussion of urban 'proximity of difference': 'Cities are evocative places, places where people are drawn into all kinds of proximate relationships, often by chance, often fleetingly and often on an unequal basis' (Allen, 1999: 85, quoted by Mac Giolla Chríost's, 2007: 22). The act of creating place is in part a semiotic process which minimally requires a deictic, or other indexical expression to anchor it socially (Hanks, 2001). These acts of anchoring space may be more or less visible, legitimate or authentic (authenticating), thus creating spaces of different accessibility, marked by different degrees of power, development and injustice (e.g. Harvey, 1989, 1996, 2006). While post-War modernism brought to the (Western) city urban renewal and stark functionalism in the service of rapidly growing capitalism, the postmodern city with its urban regeneration, redevelopment and gentrification of post-industrial areas, acceleration of consumption and the shift away from the consumption of material goods to the consumption of services, brought about a mixture of urban styles, architectural spectacle and theatricality (Harvey, 1989). Commenting on the industrially advanced capitalist societies, Guy Debord (1995 [1967]: 120) notes that they '[eliminate] geographical distance only to reap distance internally in the form of spectacular separation'.

The city itself can be read as a text, as a festival of signs – an 'iconosphere' (Porębski, 1972; Chmielewska 2005, this volume; Gendelman and Aiello, this volume), in which the tensions between the globalizing and localizing displays

of words and images manifest the aggressive ideology and dominance of global capitalism and often struggling, local identities of communities rooted in 'real' or 'imagined' places. As the competing voices of overlapping communities contend for visibility and for economic and political survival, the mosaic of different texts becomes commodified and objectified in creating a dazzling spectacle and an icon of the modern city scrutinized and consumed by the gaze of the international tourist. It is in this way that the topic of semiotic landscapes is not only timely but also politically relevant.

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