SHI-XU, *A cultural approach to discourse*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Pp. x, 233. Hb $69.95.

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This book presents Shi-xu's theoretical and methodological framework for discourse analysis, which he terms the Cultural Approach to Discourse (CAD), and critiques what he sees as the predominantly "Western" canon of social science research so far. Shi-xu argues, often convincingly and engagingly, that culture has a far more important role to play than it has hitherto enjoyed in Western approaches to discourse. He positions himself as a researcher operating from "in-between" cultures. After critiquing Western theories and methodologies of discourse research such as representationalism, universalism, and foundationalism, Shi-xu sets out the theoretical and methodological framework for CAD, and then proceeds to give practical examples of how the approach can be applied to research. Unfortunately, there are a few incongruities between the claims the author makes about his book and more generally about his approach, and what the book actually contains and what CAD is shown to have achieved. I will highlight these in the course of describing the different sections of the book. As a whole, however, *A cultural approach to discourse* contains much that will interest "Western" social scientists; it could serve as a guide to those who have previously ignored "culture" in their research (at least, in the author's estimation of the term), and will perhaps lead to interesting debates with those who have already incorporated some conception (perhaps an opposing one) of "culture" in their theoretical frameworks.

The book comprises an Introduction followed by two main sections, "Theory and methodology," and "Practical studies." The Introduction indicates Shi-xu's primary motivation for writing the book: that "the contemporary, everyday world is becoming at once increasingly interconnected and antagonistic" (p. 2). International disorder threatens our common cultural existence, according to the author, and he asserts that mainstream scholarship is striving to maintain and expand this conflict. Discourse studies practitioners, he claims, come from "Anglo-American/European Western" backgrounds and thus have corresponding culturally rooted outlooks, concepts, procedures, issues, and data. He states that CAD, in contrast, "spans an entire research system" (4) and will focus particularly on the voices of subordinated groups.

Chap. 1, "Discourse and reality," begins with a critical examination of the "representationalist" model, which sees discourse as a mirror of reality. This

model, Shi-xu argues, does not account for the importance of context to discourse, nor does it allow "research into the dynamic relationship that linguistic communication may have with the world" (18). This dynamic relationship is an essential part of the next model described, the view that discourse is "reality-constitutive." It is clear that Shi-xu considers the latter to be more convincing, and thus he adopts it into CAD. The second part of the chapter is taken up with an informative discussion of context.

In chap. 2, "Discourse and culture," Shi-xu goes further in critiquing Western discourse analysts who claim to be "objective and neutral, dispassionate and impersonal – acultural, so to speak" (42). However, he argues that attempting to achieve the opposite position, in other words being PARTICULARIST rather than UNIVERSALIST, is also not the best way to proceed. Instead, he proposes that "we theorize discourse FROM IN BETWEEN CULTURES" (43, emphasis in original). In his description of universalism, the author claims that "various Western lineages" (44) of discourse analysis subscribe to universalist portrayals of discourse, treating the object of inquiry (discourse) as objectively given. Unfortunately, he does not give details of precisely which lineages this applies to, or which scholars working within each approach have thus described discourse. Furthermore, rather perplexingly, by the next page it has become a "fact that universalism is widely accepted in language studies" (45). Despite this somewhat exaggerated claim (for counterexamples, see Titscher et al. 2000), the rest of the section on universalism contains some interesting observations on the "culture-specific origins of discourse studies" (48), and in particular raises the question of who controls the "communications system" (49) used to publish and speak about discourse studies. Once again, Shi-xu points out Western dominance in this area, which may suppress marginalized voices from other cultures. This line of argumentation presents some interesting problems for Western scholars who wish to critique Shi-xu's approach, particularly if they do not have the advantage of being able to take a perspective from "in-between cultures." If they disagree with Shi-xu, are they suppressing a non-Western voice and approach to discourse studies? For the record, I feel I should position myself as a reviewer at this point: I consider myself to be culturally Austrian and Australian, ethnically Jewish and Caucasian, and I have lived in Austria, Scotland, Australia, and England. I definitely consider myself to be "in-between" cultures, although according to Shi-xu's taxonomy of cultures (principally Western vs. non-Western) I am presumably part of "Anglo-American/European Western" culture.

To return to the book, the next section explains how CAD researchers can study discourse from in-between cultures: The theorist must forgo "grand narrative" and attend "local, hitherto marginalised" discourses, and "culturally different" theories must interact. The end of a chapter brings a statement of the goals of CAD, which include as their ultimate objective "cultural co-existence and common cultural prosperity" (67). Shi-xu offers two strategies to achieve these goals: DECONSTRUCTIVE, which broadly means undermining culturally repres-

sive discourses, and TRANSFORMATIONAL, which involves creating and advocating new or alternative discourses.

Chap. 3 sees the book moving ever closer to a practical application of CAD. In "Political ethnography" Shi-xu critically reviews what he considers to be the main Western methodological approaches to social science – phenomenology and hermeneutics. Following this comes what I see as the most serious omission from this book: The author writes, "I could move on to doing the same exercise on the Chinese methodological approaches . . . but my purpose here is not to offer a cultural comparative analysis" (83). Many readers will be familiar with at least some, if not all, of the Western methodologies he critiques, and indeed with some of their shortcomings. The same cannot be said for the Chinese approaches. I admit I am completely ignorant of them, and having read this book I remain so. A quick look at the bibliography confirms that the vast majority of references are to Western works. Surely the best way to encourage Western researchers to take an in-between cultural approach would be to present them with methodological approaches from different cultures and let them choose the ones they think fit their particular research projects best. To his credit, Shi-xu gives the address of a very informative online article about "Chinese science." However, I feel this was a missed opportunity to, as Shi-xu himself might put it, promote non-Western methodological approaches. In the next section, "Western bias in social research methodology," the author asserts that social scientific methods, for example critical discourse analysis (CDA), denigrate non-Western views and consolidate and perpetuate the Anglo/European/American Western dominant position. Perhaps I am not sufficiently able to see things from an in-between cultural perspective, but I have a very different view of CDA. In my experience CDA practitioners challenge dominant discourses, be they Western or non-Western, and bring to light hitherto hidden, marginalized discourses, irrespective of culture (a relevant example is Teo 2000) – exactly the goals Shi-xu sets out for CAD earlier in the book.

Part II comprises four practical applications of CAD. "Deconstructing the other place," in chap. 4, is an analysis of Western discourse of cultural difference and discrimination toward Singapore, China, and Hong Kong. Shi-xu focuses particularly on the construction of the "other place" and on contradictions. Chap. 5, "Reading non-Western discourses," is an analysis of China's and Hong Kong's discourses on Hong Kong's history and the end of British colonial rule. The next chapter is a study of the change over time of group identity discourses in Northern Ireland. The final chapter is an attempt to set into motion CAD's second strategy for achieving its cultural-political goals, namely advocating future discourses. It is aimed at "experts" such as scholars and educators. There is much that is of merit in all three empirical studies and in the final chapter, but there are also certain ways in which they fail to fully satisfy the requirements of CAD set out earlier in the book.

It is not entirely clear to me how any of these studies could be truly said to be in-between cultures, except in the sense that they explain events in one culture to

readers who may be in another culture. Moreover, the discourses discussed in the studies are not those of marginalized people in non-Western cultures. They are those of politicians and journalists (some in non-Western cultures, some not, but in all cases powerful individuals within their respective communities). In the third study, Shi-xu claims that "the identity discourse in Ireland and Northern Ireland has not continued through time" (196), but the evidence he cites is from political statements, agreements between governments, and speeches reported in the media. It seems somewhat risky to make such a general statement on the basis of data from just a few genres. There could be a wealth of examples of identity discourses that have remained unchanged in other genres. The final chapter is perhaps the most convincing application of the CAD framework, although it is difficult to see exactly how the suggestions offered by the author, though all laudable, can be applied in practical terms.

In conclusion, CAD as outlined in this book is a promising framework, and Shi-xu convincingly argues for more cultural diversity in social sciences research. The outline and critiques of Western theories and methodologies are mostly comprehensive and quite informative, but they lack concrete examples and at times give an inaccurate picture of current Western discourse approaches. The practical applications described in the book are good examples of a critical discourse studies approach, but it is not clear how this differs substantively from other critical approaches with similar aims, except that in two of the cases the object of research was non-Western. Shi-xu uses predominantly Western arguments to justify his approach and seems to gloss over existing non-Western approaches, so I have to conclude that the book does not do quite what it sets out to do.

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(Received 3 October 2005)

NORMAN FAIRCLOUGH, *Analyzing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge, 2003. Pp. vii + 270. Hb $135.00, Pb $31.95.

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This latest book by Norman Fairclough is an extension of his earlier work on critical discourse analysis (CDA) (e.g., Fairclough 1989, 1995, 2001). Relying on systemic functional linguistics (SFL) as his linguistic theoretical standpoint