

The Technologizing of Inhumane Practices

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Abstract

Australia's aggressive foreign policy stance, particularly on the refugee / illegal immigrant issue has been politically successful. This paper attributes this success to a two-part strategy. The first, using the theories of Said and Barthes, is to create a "ubiquitous semiotic" that plugs into Australia's invasion myth. Founded on fear and ignorance it demonizes a recognisable "other", the "oriental" refugee demonised as a queue jumper. The second part of the strategy responds to the daily news and public affairs programs, which scrutinize government actions, but also provide the locus of contesting political discourses.

The paper deals cursorily with the first part, the ubiquitous semiotic. The tactic of technologizing the inhumane is examined using sociolinguistic analysis of a television interview involving the Australian Immigration Minister. From this, it becomes evident how the process of classification into "other" allow the logic of technocratic processes to treat people inhumanely.

Introduction

Recent Australian political history shows that foreign aggression is still a winning political formula. Australia's decision to join George Bush's "Coalition of the Willing" in the Second Iraq War followed on from a tough anti-refugee stance that it had taken for the past three years (Henderson, 2002; Kohler, 2003). While Australia's willingness to join every war in which the USA has been involved since World War I is based largely on the perceived need of a powerful friend, its recent "get tough" treatment of refugees (at odds with its enviable record accepting Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s and 1980s) needs another explanation. We will attribute this to the pervasive invasion myth; however, the purpose of this paper is to show how such a perverse political action is effectively articulated within a heteroglossic electorate. We argue that a two-part communication strategy is at work. Generally, the government creates a ubiquitous semiotic of fear built on ignorance and the demonising of a recognisable "other". The second part of the strategy is to technologize the inhumane at the quotidian level of interrogation by news and public affairs (news analysis) programs (which we call truth programs). The paper will be primarily concerned with the latter strategy.

Ubiquitous Semiotic

This concept draws on the concepts of orientalism by Said and myths by Barthes. Given that this is not the central concern of this paper, we will briefly state the proposition here.

Edward Said's concept of orientalism explains how the West distinguishes itself from the East (Said, 1978). Applied to the Australian context, orientalism would hold that the Middle East and South East Asia are historically situated as Australia's *other* — its "oriental" (pp. 2-3). Australia's notorious White Australia Policy, which remained in some form until the mid-1970s since its inception in 1901, was partly a response to the threat of cheap labour as well as a racist vilification of Asiatic and African people. This has produced the dilemma of wishing for population growth while living in an Eastern location "at odds with its post-1788, colonising heritage" (Donnan, 1999). More recently orientalism has perpetuated the myth that Arabs need to be punished for the pain of September 11 inflicted on the West. That many of the refugees¹ were actually escaping the very tyranny against which George Bush and Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, went to war was never acknowledged by the Australian government.

In considering public, political postures and parlance, what matters to the electorate is the overall semiotic. Myths in the Barthesian sense are contingent discursive forms that perpetuate values and tokens of meanings (Barthes, 1973, pp 109-111). One of the most important enduring national myths has been Australia's orientalist fear. In particular, it was the traditional privilege of being white and Anglo-Celtic (Curthoys & Johnson, 1998, p.99), with its distrust of foreigners, that maintained the ideology of the White Australia Policy. Essentially this has manifested itself in a "yellow peril" (fear of the Chinese, in particular) from Federation in 1901, a "red peril" (fear of Asian Communism) in the post-war era, and then a "brown peril" (post-Communist distrust of Arabic and Middle-Eastern peoples). This contemporary materialization of the "brown peril", presupposes a signifying consciousness through the older mythologies of

¹ The authors acknowledge that there were some asylum seekers who were not genuine refugees, based on first-hand accounts by reliable and humane government staffers.

invasion. That these fears never materialized (although Australia was bombed by the Japanese in World War 2), they remain mythological in that they are connected to usage rather than truth, thereby discounting the content (Barthes, 1973, p. 110). Thus, given Australians' ignorance of Middle-Eastern geopolitics, the government has been able to contribute to the overall semiotic of an incursion by Middle Eastern refugees as "orientals" who not only have potential terrorist links, but act against the other mythological Australian characteristic of a "fair-go" by "jumping the queue".

Technologizing the Inhumane

While this general semiotic is at work, the government nevertheless has to deal with the scrutiny of the Australian press. In doing this, the government has to negotiate the discursively contested terrain: conservative voters (normally pro-Howard Government) who are disturbed by populist politics and rough treatment of refugees; the small, but influential, Arabic and Muslim constituency; and possible international condemnation. Tactics that could be employed include grey rhetoric, strategic ambiguity, or tactical rhetoric. Grey rhetoric occurs when politicians engage in political utterances that simulate being adversarial, but which are disingenuous, perfunctory, and not necessarily persuasive (Waddell & McKenna, forthcoming), and merely contribute to what de Certeau's (1985) labelled "the jabberings of social life". Strategic ambiguity refers to "those instances where individuals use ambiguity purposefully to accomplish their goals" (Eisenberg, 1984, p. 230). Hamilton and Mineo (1998) see it as forms of non-straightforward communication within politically charged discourses where equivocation, deliberate vagueness, and imprecise language are intentional (p. 3). Speakers use intentionally ambiguous texts for addressing difficult issues because they "allow divergent interpretations to coexist and are more effective in allowing diverse groups to work together" (Eisenberg & Whitten, 1987, p. 422). It is deliberately polysemous text. Tactical rhetoric includes those tactics such as repetition, bridging and distancing that seek to gain control during media interviews (Adkins, 1992; Thompson, 1998).

However, while the "technologizing" rhetoric incorporates tactical rhetoric, particularly bridging, its strategic purpose is to normalize the government's tough refugee policy and then to technologize the issue. A fundamental element of this is to objectify the subjective: to turn profound human issues into technical issues. This is consistent with Said's (1978) claim that the imperial narrative corresponds to the more general subjective / objective (self / other) relationship evident particularly in Western literature.

Methodology

This paper adopts a critical discourse analytic approach, which is an interdisciplinary "field of research" (Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 75; Meyer, 2001). However, this analysis will restrict itself to a sociolinguistic textual analysis to supplement the broader socio-semiotic conception outlined above. In particular, we adopt partially Fairclough's (1995) approach to textual analysis. While Fairclough (1989) acknowledges that "discourse cannot be reduced to language" (p 31), he does offer a mechanism that facilitates a description of power, subject, and object. Fairclough analyses discourse through close textual analysis and then relates that to the social context in which the text is produced. The textual analysis uses Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics, which is particularly useful because it assumes

that the language in texts encodes the ideational “into processes, events and actions, classes of objects, people and institutions, and the like” organised into “logical relations”; as well as the interpersonal dimensions such as “speaking roles ... wishes, feelings, attitudes and judgements” (Halliday, 1978, p. 21-22). By assuming that language is a social semiotic, textual analysis yields for the analyst the sociocultural practices that it encodes both ideationally and interpersonally. That is, the ideational aspect is “the representation and signification of the world and experience” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 133) which most accurately defines the discourse of a text, or its “way of signifying experience from a particular perspective” (p. 135).

Crucial to this analysis is how the lexis is related to the epistemic foundations (Foucault, 1972) of political belief. The lexis² provides the greatest denotative cue or trace of the (often unstated) episteme because it generates coherence in the sense that it “construes the social order without referring to the system it is construing” (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 113). In other words, we invariably taxonomise and classify our universe as we choose the lexical items to make statements about it. This is consistent with the Foucaultian (1972) understanding of “the intrication of a lexicon and an experience” in which there emerges “a group of rules proper to a discursive practice” which define “the ordering of objects” (pp. 48-49). The grammar is based on M.A.K. Halliday’s (1978; 1994) sociolinguistics. The lexico-grammatical devices will be explained as they are used in the findings.

Text Corpus

The text selected for this analysis was an interview of former Immigration and Ethnic Affairs Minister, Philip Ruddock conducted by Tony Jones on ABC’s *Lateline* and broadcast on 6 June 2002 (Jones, 2002). The lengthy interview (over 3000 words) questioned Philip Ruddock about a damning UN report on Australia’s treatment of inmates of the immigration detention centres. *Lateline* is broadcast late at night and provides serious analysis of the day’s news. The portion of text spoken by Ruddock is 2169 words. This text was analysed for a number of lexico-grammatical features.

The findings are presented in two stages. The first level of analysis is presented in Initial Findings. These are briefly discussed in the ensuing Discussion. Then a second level of analysis is provided in which the lexico-grammar of technologizing is explained.

Initial Findings

Verbs / Processes

Instead of the traditional Latinate notion of verbs, Hallidayan linguistics uses the notion of processes. The transitivity system construes the world of experience into a manageable set of six process types (Halliday, 1994, p. 106).

The text contained

- 54 existential processes (e.g., *The fact is, It is, I’m not, That’s the*

² Lexical words are differentiated from grammatical words. Lexical words that encode content include nouns, main verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Grammatical words, that have no ideational content, include prepositions, pronouns, articles, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs (Eggins, 1994, p. 101).

- *point*)
- 53 relational processes (e.g., *It is not possible, Woomera is inappropriate*)
- 65 verbal processes (e.g., *You've just argued, if you're saying to me, I take advice*)
- 56 mental processes (e.g., *I think, I believe, I don't know, we take the view*)
- 3 behavioural processes (e.g. *suffer depression, they might be suffering*)
- 79 material processes, of which
 - 11 are concrete (e.g., *simply abdicate, you release people, children should be separated*)
 - 68 are abstract (e.g., *changes will be implemented, we maintain, we've been pursuing*)

The notable features of this basic analysis are the minute number of behavioural processes (< 1%), which represent physiological and psychological behaviour, and concrete material (3.5%) processes, which represent physical activities of doing. This is significant given that the subject concerns human trauma and the activity of placing people in detention.

Only 24 (7.7%) of the processes are in passive voice, which would seem to negate the genre as bureaucratic text. Passive voice emerges mostly when Ruddock

- refers to unwanted advice and deductions, erasing the agent of that advice: for example, *but no findings have been made to that; the sorts of deductions that have been made; advice I was given* (twice); *what's been said in the press conference*.
- refers to people being detained so that the agent of detaining is not mentioned: e.g. *people who are detained* (twice) *they are to be detained*
- refers to the anti-refugee program or adaptations of it: e.g., *how those changes will be implemented; an immigration program which is implemented; issues have to be addressed; steps that have to be dealt with*.

A related lexical device is to use the verb to be (as an existential process) with the nominal of *suicide* or *dying*: e.g., *There have been suicide attempts; there have been seven deaths*.

One form of verb use is the grammatical metaphor. Martin (1992) explains that the device produces a semantic content "requiring more than one level of interpretation" (p. 16). Thus, when "He departed because of bad conditions" (the congruent structure) is rendered as "Bad conditions led to his departure", two levels of interpretation are needed: the metaphor of leading (*led*) and the action itself (*departure*). This grammatical action tends to construe experience as "things" (nouns) rather than processes, and doesn't require conjunctive relationships (*because, although* etc.) (pp. 406-407). This text contains 18 grammatical metaphors. The most commonly occurring are

- Forming a view (4)
This occurred as: *We take the view; came to the view; I've never taken that view; we took the view; views that only came from*
- Judging and deciding (4)
This occurred as: *taken the decision; conclusions they've come to; lead you to a conclusion; It doesn't come to that conclusion*
- Stating a proposition

This occurred as: *make the point* (twice); *point we made*; *point I made*; *the point I would make*.

Modality, which “hedges” the probability or usuality of statements, is relatively minor. This characteristic again is inconsistent with a bureaucratic genre. However, its relatively limited occurrence is significant in terms of what it does grammatically to the sentence. The usual modality devices of modal adjuncts (e.g., *probably, possibly, perhaps, always, sometimes*) and modal operators (e.g., *might, must*) are not used except in one instance:

But it doesn't lead you to a conclusion that you release people because they might be suffering depression into the community.

Despite considerable independent evidence, including that from his appointed Immigration Detention Advisory Group [IDAG], Ruddock qualifies the possibility that detainees are actually suffering. Other modality devices, namely the four projections of *I think* and the tag, *I believe*, were used in the following instances:

*there have been, I think, seven deaths in detention
and I think a number of them were from natural causes.*

I think two were from falls

I think in terms of the number of incidents

One was a Tongan, I believe

Each of these refers to a death in custody.

Discussion

The relatively simple lexico-grammatical analysis reveals little trace of bureaucratic language or the language of equivocation. However, several aspects indicate a similarity of persuasive intent: that is, to minimize the sense of suffering and to objectify the subject. Given the intensely traumatic impact that detention has on the detainees, the absence of corporeal or psychological features is significant. There are 23 references to the detainees: *people* (12) *women* (1) *child* (3) and *children* (4) *family* (2) *arbitrary group in detention* (1). This is relatively small in a corpus of this size. Notably absent is the term “illegal immigrants”, which is the term that the Howard Government shamelessly used despite the fact that their status was, at that time, undetermined. This indicates a discursive adjustment to the small, but politically astute, *Lateline* viewing audience. However, the processes display no emotive expression by the Minister. Of the three behavioural processes, two are about *suffering*, however, one of those is modalized (*might be suffering*). Further dulling acknowledgement of detainee suffering is the nominalizing of the action of suiciding (rendered as *suicide attempts* and the more ambiguous *deaths*). Self-mutilating is understood as an attempt to bring attention to themselves. The projection (*I think*) and the tag (*I believe*) suggests almost an indifference by the minister to the deaths that have occurred. Given that these are among the only modalities in the text, their use in this instance is quite significant in indicating that the deaths are relatively unimportant. The presence of a significant number of verbal processes (21%) points to the time-wasting and anaesthetising process of outlining statements by various agents in the debate. Apart from the six imperatives (*Look*), which act as bridging devices “to terminate the relevance of further challenges” (Adkins, 1992, p. 43; Greatbatch, 1985), the verbal processes state that he *heard, was advised or informed, [had] written, take[s] advice, put[s] the proposition*. These are procedural in nature, not substantive and so direct the answers away from the essence of the interviewer’s questions.

Technologizing Inhumanity

Technologizing discourse³ in this instance has the strategic purpose of normalizing the government's tough refugee policy and then to technologize the issue. Crucial to this is to objectify the subjective by rendering people and human issues as technical issues. The technologizing discourse has a special strategic role in the government's political campaign because it is set against the mythological background of the feared Other.

However, the political expression of a politics of aggression feeding these myths cannot be lexically substantial (as we have just detailed). The problem for politicians is that they are discursively circumscribed in an age of ubiquitous news and public affairs and, hence, they cannot candidly demonstrate a politics of aggression under such scrutiny. In other words, they cannot actually say racist things or that "we want war". The key to Bush and Howard's success in going to war was the repetition of a mantra, "Weapons of Mass Destruction" (WMDs), while creating the circumstances for the inevitability of war by moving soldiers into the Middle East, then claiming that "we can't bring them back now". Thus the process of justification alters temporally. The intended action begins as a May Be, as in "Australia may declare war on Saddam Hussein without United Nations approval" (English & Farr, 2003). This becomes an Is: "Howard phones Camp David and says war is going well" (Grubel, 2003). This becomes a Was, which leaders hope will be positive: "John Howard claimed triumphant vindication for Australia's participation in the Iraq war...declaring it had ... liberated an oppressed people" (Barker, 2003). However, when outcomes are negative or ambiguous, governments have a way of disassociating from the past by projecting to the future. This is especially evident in the phrase "to move on": "Australians had 'moved on' ... no longer interested in ... Iraq's weapons of mass destruction" (Overington, 2003).

While the government used the mantras of *illegal immigrants* and *queue jumpers*, the discursive strategy is more complex, the refugee issue remains tacitly contentious in Australia. Effectively it is no longer newsworthy, and opposition has dissipated. So the "was" is largely irrelevant now as a political issue (whereas it is an enormous issue for George Bush trying to turn the Iraq quagmire into a Was). Despite the fact that the minister who recently replaced Ruddock announced that 90% (8260 of 9160 arrivals in the three years to July 2002)⁴ of the boat people had been classified as genuine refugees (Morris, 2003), there was no outcry at the government's blatant dishonesty (and to which their 2001 electoral success was largely attributed). The role that Ruddock had to play while the issue was politically extant ("Is") was to neutralize the inhumanity of the policy. He did this by using the technique of technologizing the inhumane. The essential elements of this discourse incorporate technocratic discourse.

³ We use the term *rhetoric* to refer to the persuasive strategy of an interview. *Discourse* here means the set of conditions that allows language to make meaning to groups of people in different social and tempo-spatial locations. Any statement occurs in an "enunciative field in which it has a place and a status" (Foucault). Discourse is a group of rules for speaking in various situations based on knowledge, social practices, subjectivity, and power relations.

⁴ Exact figures are hard to determine as several thousand boat people were deported or moved to various Pacific sites, such as Nauru.

Technocratic discourse primarily establishes and maintains “a social élite, its claims of privilege and its access to power” according to Lemke (1995, p. 61). It organizes the universe in a particular way (p. 76), thereby orienting the listener / reader / viewer towards a particular way of seeing the world. The discourse divests certain forms of social practices of their social, ethical, political, and moral values, thus presenting their discourses as objective, value-free truth (Saul, 1997, ch. 2). In this way, there is an “abridgement of meaning which has a political connotation” but depoliticizes the discourse at the same time (Marcuse, 1968, p. 79). The discourse is characterized by four lexico-grammatical features. The first is extensive use of the nominal and the nominal group. The role of the process (verb) is limited by extensive use of existential and relational verbs that mostly appear as verbs “to be” and “to have” (Halliday & Martin, 1993). The third characteristic is to repeat the familiar word, usually a noun or a noun group. The fourth characteristic is the diminution of human agency.

The most common nouns in the interview are *advice* (11), *system* (6), and *issue(s)* (4). This helps to construct the interviewer’s responses in a legal-bureaucratic genre. In this way, traumatic human matters are treated as issues, for which a system delivers a response. The minister *takes advice*, rather than acting from political motives, thereby presenting an element of apparent objectivity. The nominal (group) used with a verb “to be” creates relatively inert text. Consider Ruddock’s response to the interviewer’s question:

TONY JONES: *Yes, but IDAG drew your attention particularly to Woomera and asked for it to be shut down because of their fear of an endemic culture of self-harm. Now IDAG has spoken to Justice Joinet and his working group, and he's saying much the same thing.*

PHILIP RUDDOCK: {excised portion} ... *I mean, the question has been a matter of government consideration and we came to the view the most appropriate centre to close was the Curtin facility.*

Ruddock has been presented with a damning recommendation from his own advisory group [IDAG] based on the detainees’ record of self-harm. However, the minister restates this tragic and damning request as a “question”. Then he uses a relational verb to re-cast the question as “a matter of government consideration”, a 5-word nominal phrase.

The nominal, or nominal group, is actually a crucial element of the technocratizing process because in science and technology, the foundation of all processes (actions, relations), is the classification of the object and its relation to other objects. The justification presented below provides the classification for Ruddock’s calculative technology. From this classification system the appropriate logic for dealing with the people and things so classified is devised. The detainees are classified as those who are *without lawful authority*, who are outside the *borders*; they do not form part of the *public interest*; later they are labelled an *arbitrary group in detention*:

PHILIP RUDDOCK: *No, no, put it in context.*

If people turn up without lawful authority, they are to be detained.

What other approach are you going to take other than to release people into the community and simply abdicate entirely the possibility of being able to manage and control your own borders and have an immigration program which is implemented in the public interest?

It is important, too, that potentially harmful or injurious outcomes are diminished. In the following extract, an act of *self-harm* (mutilation, attempted suicide) becomes an *incident report*. That is, the human trauma becomes an act that is recorded (*report*) for acting upon within the bureaucratic guidelines of constraint:

The number of incident reports, and they're not just involving Woomera, were something of the order of 230 over 90,000 detention days.

The objective appearance and assuaging intention of the data, however, does not withstand scrutiny (the interviewer certainly could not have done the necessary calculations). The figures are, in fact, alarming. Given that there were, on average, 350 inmates (using the minister's own figures), then almost two-thirds of them, on average, were self-harming or attempting suicide.

Another nominal group provides a further insight into the technologization process. Ruddock states:

Woomera is the only place where we've been able to institute an alternative detention model for women and children.

The detention process is no longer the political issue having been normalized by the *systems* and *processes* that are set in place. The issue now is an organizational management one: *models* of control within an existing institution. Even the private security company that services the centre has a *very comprehensive code of behaviour outlined for the running of the detention centres*. Bureaucratic processes are in place to ensure that contractors *meet the conditions*. It is important that uncertainty is reduced because this limits the capacity for completing the task:

it is because people like the arbitrary group in detention and others expect that there will be an opportunity for decisions to be reviewed and like there to be systems of appeal that you have uncertainty in our system

Given that there is a *control* process, the detainees have to *behave*: If they don't, they become *issues to be addressed*. This is evident in Ruddock's statement that:

issues in relation to behaviour in detention have to be addressed as issues requiring proper treatment and care for the people who are detained.

Even the most inhumane feature of the detention, the jailing of children, is diminished by the appearance of choice:

If the proposition is that children, for their own psychological and state of mind, should not be in detention, and the competent authorities form that view, they can be removed tomorrow.

But these apparently reasonable structures actually provide a Scylla and Charybdis choice for the children's parents, because the children would not be accompanied by their parents in open society. In this way, the minister can claim that those authorities who are sympathetic to the refugees actually support his policy of incarcerating children:

The advice is that when faced with the choice, and it is a choice, of in the community [sic] but without family or in detention with family, the decision has always been to date that they should remain in the latter situation.

The logic of action, then, is now clear. The refugee issue is not an issue of humanitarianism, but of managing and controlling your borders from those who fail to meet the defined category:

the fact [is] we're a sovereign government that's entitled to take decisions in Australia's interests and for the protection of our community, and we do.

Those who identify another duty, the duty of care to other citizens of the world, according to this form of calculative logic, do not respect the sovereignty of a nation protecting its community: in effect, they are traitorous. Clearly, refugees are not and will not be part of this *community* so defined.

Technical processes are, above all else, practical, and this is also evident in Ruddock's response below. The grammatical device of interest here is Cohesion, which is revealed through conjunctive relationships that create "intersentence relationship" (Martin, 1992, p. 19). The conjunctive relationship is established through the coordinating conjunction, *and*:

I've heard their advice, and I've looked at the practical issues in relation to the way in which we should deal with Woomera.

And I've made a decision about how those changes will be implemented.

And I have written today in fact to IDAG, advising them that we treat the advice that they have given seriously and explaining to them the practical difficulties in implementing the advice they have given.

What Ruddock provides is not just a sequence of events [I've heard ... I've looked ... I've made a decision ... I have written to explain], but also a juxtaposition of *their advice* and *practical issues* that only he understands. By technologizing inhumane practices as practical actions and processes, the system takes on a life of its own in no further need of ethical or humanitarian considerations. The minister agrees to make some changes, but not to fundamentally alter the logic of the system.

Ministerial arbitrary power might be limited by an advisory group and by an external agency (the UN). However, there are processes and defined limitations for these too. There are clearly limits for his advisory group, another modern organizational mechanism ostensibly designed to make organizations more responsive. This group clearly exceeded their role (*their mandate, their remit*) when they drew attention to the deeply disturbing features of the current system. Their role, the minister pointed out, was to identify "whether the detention centre system we have here is arbitrary". But, of course he can justifiably say that it is not arbitrary because there is a regime of classification and procedural action that is well documented. On the other hand, if an independent report delivers a negative judgement, then the report itself can be categorised as relatively less important. Of the damning report, Ruddock says:

I think that the comments today were fairly superficial and certainly don't reflect a detailed consideration of all the issues.

But when they do report comprehensively, I'll look at it to see whether there are improvements that can be suggested.

This helps in the process of deferral by legalising the process in such a way that makes it difficult for those who are disadvantaged to be able to use the safeguarding mechanisms.

Calculative Technologies, Rhetoric, and Politics

This paper uses an interdisciplinary Critical Discourse Analysis approach to consider political text from a semiotic, discursive, and lexico-grammatical perspective. From this, significant insights into current political communication techniques have been provided. These should be disturbing to those interested in humane politics. White deliberative rhetoric is intended to lead to, or actively prevent, an action; in other words, it is concrete and purposeful (Remer, 1999, pp.

41-42). It should motivate others to understand, support, or care for a philosophy, policy, cause, or notion that the locutor believes will improve the human condition (Aristotle, 1991). We argue that, in its place, an insidious form of political discourse is emerging, technologizing the inhumane. A defining characteristic of this form of discourse is “the apparent transformation of the subjective into the objective” (Rose, 1992, p. 153). Underlying this is an ontological universe built upon the practices and claims by “experts of truth” who determine “concepts of normality and pathology, danger and risk, social order and social control, and the judgements and devices which such concepts have inhabited.” (Rose, 1999, p. 30). These discursive mechanisms present phenomena to us “as an intelligible field with specifiable limits and particular characteristics” (p. 33) that then naturalize certain activities, without ethical reference.

If we wish to preserve democracy and to maintain humanitarian values, it is crucial then that we resist the technologies that logically, through systems of classification that exclude or include, present plausible policies that appear to protect us from the mythologies about the Other.

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