

Charlie Hebdo and the prophet Muhammad: a multimodal critical discourse analysis of peace and violence in a satirical cartoon.

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INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we examine how ideologies of peace and violence can be (re)produced and communicated via multiple semiotic forms that include, but are not restricted to, language. We grapple with the complexity and importance of the situated-ness of peace and violence, and consider, what does peace, indeed what *can* peace, look like in a social context where meaning and expression are both multiple and contested. To this end, we undertake a case study analysis, exploring how a multimodal text might be variously interpreted as an explicit display of peace and forgiveness, and yet simultaneously as an oppressive act which knowingly causes offense. In addressing these issues, we relate to Galtung's (1996, p. 196) typology of violence, and we consider the issue of cultural violence, which he defines as "those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence [...] that can be used to legitimize direct or structural violence".

Discursive Psychology, critical discourse studies and multimodal discourse analysis

Since the 1980s, three broadly separable strands of discourse analysis (DA) have evolved from origins which can be traced back to critical linguistics; the work of Foucault; and the sociology of scientific knowledge (Wooffitt, 2005), although there are many cross-fertilisations between these origins which can be found amongst the body of discursive psychology (DP) research. The range and flexibility of DP approaches bring to the fore an assortment of issues for researchers related to research questions, data, analysis and interpretation in the research process. This leads us to the relationship between more traditional DP (e.g., Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992, te Molder & Potter 2004) and

critical discourse studies (CDS), an umbrella term for discursive work which sets out with an explicit agenda to examine and challenge social problems and inequalities, and study relations of power and institutional systems and practices (e.g., Fairclough, 1989, 2001; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 2001; 2015; Wodak & Meyer, 2015). CDS bears an important yet, sometimes, contentious relation to DP, where some consider *all* DP to be critical, whilst some others within CDS argue that much of DP is not critical enough (for discussion of this, see Wooffitt, 2005). Moreover, not all advocates of more traditional discursive analytic methods are at ease with the critical ambitions of CDS (see Schegloff, 1997). When orienting to these issues it can be helpful to consider how one's use of theory, choice of analytical objects, cultural and historical contextualisation, and political advocacy is arranged to determine where one's own work fits (Meyer, 2001).

In this chapter we are concerned with examining how power, psychology and language are interwoven and how they shape and constrain social action institutionally and interactively, thus we align our work with critical discourse studies. However, we have a further ambition to examine how multiple semiotic components are arranged, articulated and interpreted in the construction of a given discourse. We therefore position our approach as a 'multimodal critical discourse analysis' (MCDA). Multimodal practitioners view discourse as incorporating diverse semiotic forms such as language, imagery, sound and gesture to construct meaning. Rather than focussing solely on language, within the analytic process they seek to incorporate as much "semiotic complexity and richness" as possible (Iedema, 2003, p.39). The field of multimodal studies (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, 20016; van Leeuwen, 1999, 2005) is increasingly driven by recognition that contemporary technologies are re-shaping communicative practices, and the reach of multimodality extends to newly innovated technologies as well as those that were previously the preserve of more mono-modal communications (Levine & Scollon, 2004). Iedema (2003) argues that "the increased

ubiquity of sound, image, film, through TV, the computer and the internet is undoubtedly behind this new emphasis on and interest in multi-semiotic complexity” (p.33). However, this multimodal turn has not only been prompted by attempts to comprehend postmodernity. As van Leeuwen (2004) notes when considering Kitchener’s 1914 recruitment poster, it would be incredulous to evaluate all forms of discourse *solely* in terms of their language when imagery and graphics can also contribute to the construction of communicative acts. Machin and Mayr (2012, p.76) argue that a range of features, including verbal description, gaze and pose “can be used to implicitly communicate kinds of identities and in turn evaluate the actions of participants”. Thus, to solely focus on language in a discourse which incorporates a range of semiotic forms can lead to under-analysis or, potentially, misleading interpretations.

Given our undertaking to adopt a *critical* multimodal approach, it is helpful to note that CDS scholars do typically conceptualise discourse in its broadest semiotic sense, with discourse understood to incorporate all manner of meaningful signs (Fairclough, 2001), albeit, the majority of CDS research to date has focussed solely upon the study of talk and text (Machin, 2016). There is however, a growing interest in studying multimodality within a critical framework (e.g., Carter, 2011; Catalano & Waugh, 2013; Djonov & Zhao, 2014; Machin, 2013; Richardson, 2016; Richardson & Wodak, 2009). Following a review of studies which employed MCDA to examine a range of media, including photographs, toys and music, Carter (2011, p.61) argues that in each case, MCDA serves to “better understand how language and other types of semiotic signs are used together to construct, express, and challenge social power”. The focus of our analysis is a political cartoon; hence, we are engaging with a discourse where the visual and textual are heavily interwoven. Any attempt to discursively examine this medium, we suggest, must therefore consider both the textual and the visual components, addressing how they inter-relate in the construction and communication of a discourse.

MCDA as applied to political cartoons

According to El Refaie (2009, p.175), the function of political cartoons is “to represent an aspect of social, cultural or political life in a way that condenses reality and transforms it in a striking, original and/or humorous way”. They are a fruitful site of investigation because they display culturally embedded values and perpetuate widely shared beliefs. They identify with ideas, address issues, and highlight contrasts between differing groups (Mazid, 2008). Their achievement of meaning is typically managed through satirical humour and use of metaphor. James Gillray’s ‘Little Boney in a Strong Fit’ (published in 1803), depicting Napoleon I’s obsession with the British, is a good example. The physical illustrations of his imperial ambitions, such as the Roman consular chair, globe, and his triumphal hat all corroborate criticism of his military and political goals.¹ A more contemporary example is Jonathon Shapiro’s cartoon, published in September 2008, with the then-President of South Africa Jacob Zuma grinning as he unzips his trousers in front of a group of men (with political abbreviations on their hats), holding down a blindfolded woman in distress wearing a ribbon titled ‘Justice System’, an allegorical criticism reminiscent of criminal charges that were being made against Zuma.² From these two examples we can see that the communicative functions of cartoons are achieved through both visual metaphors and their situated textual claims. Further, we see how “parody, borrowing, plagiarism, generic and/or thematic similarity” are achieved through both literal interpretation and through a layer of “cultural, emotional, or ideological overtones and undertones” (Mazid, 2008, p.440).

In his extensive discussion of cultural violence, Galtung (1996) highlights that in secularized Western nations where concerns with categories of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ have come to reign, ideology is a key driver of cultural violence. Galtung (1996, p. 204) states “Combine

¹ For the cartoon, see the British Museum website (<http://tinyurl.com/James-Gillray-Maniac-Raving-s>)

² For the cartoon, see Shapiro’s website (<https://www.zapiro.com/cartoons/080907st>)

nationalism with steep Self Other gradients, and statism with the right, even the duty to exercise ultimate power and we get the ugly ideology of the nation-state”. Applying MCDA to the genre of political cartoons offers an excellent opportunity to explore the semiotic construction of ideological messages of Western nation-states. Indeed, the study of ideology is not uncommon within MCDA research (e.g., Gamson & Stuart’s (1992) study on the ‘symbolic contest’ between universal and national frames of reference in nuclear weapon cartoons). More recently, Mazid (2008) considers how verbal and visual signs were used to construct meaning in the context of (de)legitimation of ideological claims. Analyzing two particular cartoons in a corpus of President Bush and Osama Bin Laden cartoons, Mazid shows how differing stylistic and generic features were engaged to commonly invoke God and the belief in righteous action to justify their opposition to one another. It is notable that in both cases, despite being presented as oppositional characters, they are commonly ridiculed as being similarly hateful, bloodthirsty, and as the antonym to the “holy fighters” (p.452), personas which they both seek to uphold (cf. Leudar, Marland & Nekvapil, 2004). Elsewhere, Müller, Özcan and Seizov (2009) investigate three related cases of cartoon controversies, including one case of direct relevance to us, concerning the Muslim prophet Muhammad published in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten. Noting the general pattern to denote Muhammad in unpleasant and threatening ways, Müller et al. (2009) argue that the tendency to present Muhammad in the cartoons with an aggressive demeanour produces stark connotations between Islam and violence/terrorism (e.g., by having a bomb as a turban). Despite a potential for reading cartoons such as ‘Bomb in the Head’ as bringing a satirical challenge to extremist fundamentalism which claims to act in the name of Muhammad, the satirising components of the cartoon also present an inflammatory conflation of violent fundamentalism with the peaceful practice of Islam. The same can be said of ‘Muhammad in the Desert’, in this case the decision to feature a donkey in the cartoon alongside Muhammad,

allows for ambivalent interpretations, ranging from pilgrimage and humility (judged by the audience in Denmark), to stupidity (amongst some of the wider international audience). In both cases Müller et al. (2009) contend that the employment of “stereotypical and offensive depictions of another culture to make a statement” (p.33), and present Islam as a “cradle for mass-murderers and lunatics” (p.35).

The Case Study: Charlie Hebdo and the ‘survivors issue’ cover

Charlie Hebdo is a satirical weekly magazine that publishes in France, self-defining as a “secular, political and jubilant” periodical that “draws, writes, interviews, ponders and laughs at everything on this earth which is ridiculous, giggles at all that is absurd or preposterous in life”.³ Of interest to us is the controversy surrounding the successive publication of cartoons featuring the prophet Muhammad. Widely reported across global media, their cartoons have been variously interpreted as contentious provocations toward Islam which disregard iconographic norms and thereby ride roughshod over Muslim cultural sensitivities, and/or for depicting Islam in crude, stereotypical and offensive fashion. In contrast, other commentators have applauded the magazine, viewing these cartoons as the expression of universal civic rights of free speech, secularism and equality.

We can trace this controversy to the period following Charlie Hebdo’s 2006 reprinting of the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten series of Muhammad cartoons (see Müller et al, 2009). The reprinting in Charlie Hebdo stimulated debates over whether depictions of Muhammad saying ‘it’s hard being loved by jerks’ promoted Islam as a mainstream religion with small minorities of fundamentalist followers, or if it was a blatant display of editorial conflation between Muslims in general and Muslim extremists. Later, a renaming of the editor-in-chief as Muhammad with the caption ‘100 lashes of the whip if you don't die laughing’ (following

³ see <https://charliehebdo.fr/en/>

pronouncements of Sharia law in Libya and Islamist party electoral success in Tunisia) was met with a similar reception. It was also followed by a firebombing of their offices and a subsequent hacking of their website. Across these instances, government ministers and journalists alike expressed a range of contradictory messages, ranging from condemnations of violence, disappointment over their alleged provocation, to universal support for free speech and the right to present any subject matter. Such contrasting responses highlight the situated and contextual qualities of interpretation, and in this context, the ethnic, cultural, political and religious identities of the audience are key, with the potential for political satire to perform cultural violence (Galtung, 1996).

On January 7th 2015 two armed men attacked the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris. In total these attacks killed twelve people, including Charlie Hebdo staff, one visitor and two police officers. Responsibility for the attacks was subsequently claimed by Al Qaeda, allegedly operating within Yemen (Aboudi, 2015). The attacks were internationally condemned amongst the Western media and public, and the phrase 'Je suis Charlie' circulated in a flurry of support for Charlie Hebdo's stance on maintaining their satirical defiance. In response to the attack, Charlie Hebdo announced an increase in publication for the next edition, labelling it the 'Survivors Issue'. It is the front page of this 'Survivors Issue' which provides the focus for our analysis. Adopting an MCDA approach, we endeavour to demonstrate how the combined affordances of varied semiotic forms enable the development of a discourse which engenders multiple and conflicting interpretations related to ideas and possibilities, both for peace, and for violence.

METHODOLOGY

Aligning with Mazid (2008, p. 435), we view cartoons as a "hybridization of a variety of codes – language, picture, colour and sometimes movement" which require analysis of the

verbal and non-verbal content, and the interactions between the two, in order to develop an appreciation of the complex multimodal action of the discourse. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), visuals involve both represented participants (those people, places and things depicted in the visual), and interactive participants (the producers, and the receivers of the visual). The visual provides a medium through which interactive participants communicate with one another as they undertake to "produce and make sense of images in the context of social institutions which, to different degrees and in different ways, regulate what may be 'said' with images, how it should be said, and how it should be interpreted" (p.114). Within the genre of political cartoons, the regulatory norms which govern how represented participants are depicted are expected to differ from those which routinely apply to other, more traditional forms of visual discourse. Indeed, the capacity to subvert and satirize is the basis of the genre, thus political cartoons are able to resist the constraints of traditional visual discourse, and thereby provoke different possibilities regarding 'what can be said'. However, as Mazid (2008, p. 435) notes, the interactive potential of the political cartoon remains embedded within a given context, such that "wherever they might be on the true-untrue continuum, political cartoons can only be produced and perceived in a socio-historical background." Our case study analysis of the Charlie Hebdo 'Survivors Issue' front page draws upon the methods of visual analysis developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) (see also Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; van Leeuwen, 2005; van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001) to undertake a close examination of both the textual and visual components, and to further consider how the textual and the visual intersect, and how they interact with pre-existing, situated, contingent layers of social and cultural meaning and group based identities.

ANALYSIS

We proceed by analysing the visual components and the textual components in turn, we then draw this together and consider how the visual and the textual are interwoven in the construction of a situated discourse.

Composition overview

The overall page comprises a limited number of visual elements arranged in a simple composition. The central represented participant is a head and shoulders cartoon caricature of a single male figure. This is widely accepted to be a portrayal of the prophet Muhammad, and the artist confirmed this to be the case ("How I created Charlie Hebdo", 2015). Throughout our analysis, we therefore refer to this represented participant as Muhammad. Muhammad is drawn centrally on the page, occupying a sizeable section of the overall visual. Alongside him, two additional elements appear. One is a three-word headline (ALL IS FORGIVEN), which is located above the head of Muhammad, the other is a placard which is held in front of his upper torso. A further three words (I AM CHARLIE) are written on the placard. The only other components on the page are the standard magazine mast head, the artist signature, and the optical barcode. The overall organisation of the page, and the represented participants provide the reader with a 'visual syntax' (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001), which, in this cartoon, is highly simplistic. We note that such simplicity is not typical for the genre of political cartoons, and this syntax distinguishes our data from many prior Muhammad cartoons published on the front page, and within the pages of Charlie Hebdo ⁴.

Jewitt and Oyama (2001) describe visual syntax as a "matter of spatial relationships, of 'where things are' in the semiotic space and of whether or not they are connected through lines, or through visual 'rhymes' of colour, shape and so on" (p. 141). Aligning with Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) they distinguish between narrative and conceptual syntactic

⁴ For some examples of prior Charlie Hebdo front page portrayals of Muhammad see Taibi (2015)

patterns. Narrative patterns are those which present sequences of actions, turns of events or processes of change, whilst conceptual patterns represent more generalised, often more stable qualities, or essences. Conceptual patterns do not represent something as 'doing', but rather "as being something, or meaning something, or belonging to some category, or having certain characteristics or components" (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001, p.141). According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the distinction between narrative and conceptual representations can be made dependent on the presence of vectors, which are only found in narrative structures. Vectors are visual elements that often form a clear diagonal line, the function of which is to express a "dynamic 'doing' or 'happening' kind of relation" (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001, p. 141). (e.g., connective arrows in a diagram or an outstretched, pointing finger). In contrast, conceptual patterns often engage classification processes which provide some means for relating people, places, and things to each other within the process of representation. The dearth of vectors in our data (note: we do identify one vector which we address later), coupled with the spatial composition of the page, indicates a conceptual visual syntax, and as our analysis progresses we will examine each element outlined above in detail and consider how the conceptual syntax serves the production of semantic meaning. However, our first point of analysis begins with a consideration of colour.

Colour

There are only four colours used in the cartoon. Black is used for outlining Muhammad, outlining the placard, writing the text on the placard, and scribing the headline. The facial features of Muhammad are also drawn in black. White is used for his eyes, and for all his clothing. A beige tone is used for the face and hands, and also the placard. The final colour, and the only primary or secondary colour to feature, is a vivid pea green. This colour provides a solid background colour to the whole page. The scale of its use and the absence of

other colours make green a significant component of the cartoon. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) refer to colours as signifiers which “carry a set of affordances from which sign-makers and interpreters can select according to their communicative needs and interests in a given context” (p. 232). They point to the 'provenance' of colour, its often ready associations with existing forms of meaning, and the potential for colour to carry "significant symbolic value in the given sociocultural context" (p. 233). They further point to the potential diversity and multiplicity of the communicative affordances of colour, highlighting that the analyst should take close account of how colours might be understood to variously contribute to the construction of the discourse for a given audience. For example, in the contemporary UK context, the use of red, white and blue in a political cartoon whose subject matter is 'Brexit' might be understood to introduce discourses of national identity into the fray, at least for a UK audience. Thus, colour can perform interdiscursive work, in this example, weaving concerns with national identity into debates about political exit from Europe.

Taking account of the points above, and recognising that colour has a ‘cultural history’ (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) with implications for how it is received by a given audience, we suggest that the use of green in this cartoon does rhetorical work. In Islamic culture, the colour green is widely viewed as the ‘colour of Islam’(see Abu Bakar, n.d.). Thus, it has important communicative functions for a Muslim audience. Use of a green background in other ‘Muhammad’ cartoons, and the Islamic cultural significance of this is elsewhere discussed in the analysis by Müller et al. (2009), and we also note that two previous Charlie Hebdo ‘Muhammad’ front covers published in 2012 and 2013 similarly use a solid green background (see Taibi, 2015). Drawing on the work of Michael Halliday, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) distinguish between three communicative semiotic metafunctions: ideational; interpersonal, and textual. The ideational function of colour relates to the ways in which colour “can be used to denote people, places and things as well as classes of people,

places and things, and more general ideas” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 229). We argue that the extensive use of green in this cartoon fulfils an ideational purpose, saturating the discourse with, potentially variable, communicative affordances.

Given the significance of green in Islamic culture, its use in this cartoon makes available a discourse in which Islam is central. The extensive use of green, coupled with the absence of any other primary or secondary colours ensures that this reference is not a subtle backgrounding. What is especially key however is the potential that colour avails for differing interpretations depending on how green features in the 'cultural history' of the audience. We suggest that for a Muslim audience, the extensive use of green flags Islam as a critical element of the discourse, asserting Muslim category membership as salient, and Islam integral to the Charlie Hebdo attacks. In many respects, the cartoon can be understood to promote and cohere with the prevailing Western discourses surrounding the Charlie Hebdo attacks, and the subsequent response to those events. However, as we have indicated, such a reading may differ dependent on symbolic relevance that the audience attaches to the colour. Non-Muslim audiences may fail to attach any meaning to the use of green. Alternatively they may be aware of the Islamic cultural significance of the colour, thus they may similarly locate Islam as central to the discourse. However, the non-Muslim audience would do so in the context of being *not* Muslim, hence and a concern with the Muslim ‘other’ is foregrounded. These differing interpretative possibilities linked to colour reveal an initial indication of varying communicative potentials of the cartoon. Against this culturally loaded background, we now examine all the represented participants (people, objects, things) that feature on the page.

Represented Participants

When it comes to visual representations of people, portrayals of closeness and distance communicate something about the social relations between the represented participant and the viewer. Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) propose that the represented participant is evaluated by the viewer in accordance with the normative degrees of physical closeness and distance that are maintained between people in everyday social interactions. In the 'Survivors Issue' front page, the head, shoulders and upper torso of Muhammad are presented in a style typically referred to as a close-up, thereby communicating the potential for closeness between the represented participant and the audience.

Muhammad is depicted with a closed and distinctly downturned mouth conveying an unambiguous display of sadness. His eyes are wide and looking outward from the page in a direct gaze. From the left eye, a single tear is falling. The use of direct gaze in our data contrasts notably with the cartoons analysed by Müller et al. (2009). They state that in the cartoon labelled 'Muhammad in the Desert', "his gaze is defiant and unfriendly" (p. 31), whilst in the other two cartoons analysed, the authors report a complete lack of eye contact with the viewer. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), there is a crucial difference between images in which represented participants look directly at the viewers' eyes, and images where this does not occur. In direct gaze images "vectors, formed by the participants' eyelines, connect the participants with the viewer. Contact is established, even if it is only on an imaginary level." [thereby creating] "a visual form of direct address" (p.117). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) theorise that such images constitute an 'image act', whereby the image makes a form of demand on the viewer. They highlight that the significance of direct gaze, or 'demand' images, has been studied by art historians who point to the development of this type of gaze as an innovation in portraiture, whereby the gaze of the subject instils a sense of scrutiny in the viewer, or requires some form of reciprocity. The 'demand' which the image makes upon the viewer is often signified by other elements of the visual, for example, an

accompanying hand gesture, or facial expression, might invite the viewer closer or insist they stay back. Relating this to our analysis, the direct gaze of Muhammad, coupled with the close-up portrayal which implies closeness with the audience, can be understood to construct a direct communication between Muhammad and the viewer, through which the sorrowful facial expression both conveys and seeks a unifying emotional experience. Thus, where colour can be understood to elevate cultural and religious boundaries between Muslim and non-Muslim, gaze and positioning potentially downplay these boundaries.

Like many prior Charlie Hebdo portrayals of Muhammad, in the ‘Survivors Issue’ Muhammad is portrayed with a bulbous, drooping nose. The shape and size of the nose conveys a highly stereotypical physiognomic depiction of the Muslim ‘other’, which is similarly reported by Müller et al. (2009). The portrayal of a “Central Asian nose” to convey stereotypical notions of a homogenised Muslim ‘other’ is also noted by Moloney, Holtz and Wagner (2013, p.291) in their analysis of Australian political cartoons. These authors suggest that such stereotypical tendencies are common across the Western world. Interestingly however, whilst we see this stereotypical facial feature of the Muslim ‘other’ in our data, we also identify clear differences with respect to the portrayal of other facial features.

Specifically, in our data, Muhammad’s beard is conservatively drawn, leaving much of the face on display, above and below the mouth. This contrasts with the findings of Moloney et al. (2013) where beards of Muslim men were found to be heavily exaggerated. Our findings similarly contrast with Müller et al’s (2009) analysis of other Muhammad cartoons.

Analysing the cartoon which they label as ‘Muhammad with Scimitar and Two Veiled Women’, Müller et al. (2009, p. 32) report that Muhammad is portrayed with a “long wild beard, a moustache, and thick eyebrows”. Similar findings are also reported for the cartoon ‘Bomb in the Head’. It appears that the ‘Survivors Issue’ portrayal of Muhammad walks a line between maintaining the salience of Muslim identity, and minimising religious or

cultural boundaries between Muhammad as representative of Islam, and the Muslim/non-Muslim audience.

Turning to consider clothing, Muhammad is depicted wearing a simple white robe and turban. There is no shading to suggest movement or volume in the clothing, and no indication of anything concealed within the clothing. Again, we witness interesting contrasts between our data, and the depiction of clothing in each of the three cartoons analysed by Müller et al. (2009), the most provocative of which portrays Muhammad wearing a large black turban drawn to appear as “a large bomb with a fuse on top that has already been lit” (p 31).

Moloney et al. (2013), similarly report the subversion of traditional female Muslim dress in the cartoon referred to as ‘Does my bomb look big in this’ which portrays two women each wearing a full veil whilst concealing explosives beneath their black robes. This kind of visual subversion is typical of political cartoons and, as Moloney et al. (2013; 289) maintain, emphasizing the traditions of Muslim dress promotes an “essentialist perception that ‘Muslims are all the same’”, and elevates the construction of a violent and dangerous Muslim ‘other’. It is striking that such subversion is absent in the ‘Survivors Issue’ cartoon.

Perspective, Angles and Power

Drawing upon studies in the history of Art, Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) propose that since the Renaissance, images in Western culture can be categorised as being either with or without a central perspective. Subjective images (with central perspective) are understood to present the viewer with a particular viewpoint, whilst objective images (without central perspective), seek to convey to the viewer all that can be known. Jewitt and Oyama (2001) further outline how the development of visual perspective during the renaissance facilitated the development of visual ‘points of view’. Referring to previous visual analysis undertaken by Jewitt (1997, 1999), these authors suggest that ‘frontal angle’ can be used to “increase audience

identification and involvement with represented participants" (p. 138). Relating this to the frontal angle used to depict Muhammad in the 'Survivors Issue' front page, we can theorise that the use of frontal angle here provides a further means by which a connection between Muhammad and the audience is offered.

It is also notable in the 'Survivors Issue' front page that the frontal angle and the perspective used constructs an openness to the image of Muhammad which lacks the usual satirical subversion, or any suggestion that there is something 'more' than meets the eye going on. The sole object in the cartoon is a placard which Muhammad holds in front of his chest with both of his hands visible either side of the placard. There is nothing to suggest that anything is hidden about his person, or that anything more can be known about the image. This certainty about what is contained in the image contrasts with other cartoons already discussed. As we noted earlier, in the cartoon labelled 'Bomb in the Head' it is the subversion of the turban as a bomb which acts as a focal object through which a demonization and othering of Muslim culture is achieved. Whilst in 'Muhammad with Scimitar and Two Veiled Women' the prophet holds a sabre, which the authors suggest constructs an "aggressive dagger-wielding impression" (Müller et al, 2009, p. 32). Elsewhere, in an analysis of cartoon portrayals of Osama bin Laden and George Bush, Mazid (2008; p. 447) notes that Bin Laden is portrayed in traditional Muslim dress "sitting on a prayer-carpet, keeping his exceptionally long, flowing beard, yet still carrying his berretta on his left shoulder". The similarity of the portrayals of the prophet Muhammad and of Osama bin Laden in previous cartoons, not only serve to construct the two protagonists as members of a shared Muslim category, but the portrayal of these men in traditional Muslim dress, whilst also wielding deadly weaponry again conflates everyday Muslim norms (i.e. the mundane practice of wearing traditional dress), with practices of extreme violence. Again, the contrast between previously analysed cartoons, and the way in which the 'Survivors' Issue' presents Muhammad, is clear. Overall

then we see how the use of perspective has implications for the rhetorical work of the multimodal discourse

Linked to the communicative functions of perspective, multimodal theorists contend that viewing angles have implications for power relations. Put simply, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) propose that when the visual constructs a perspective in which the viewer appears to look down upon a represented participant, it affords the viewer power, conversely if the angle requires the viewer look up, power lies with the represented participant, and when the viewer and the represented participant are portrayed at eye level, no power differential is constructed. Jewitt and Oyama (2001) suggest that viewing angles and points of view create 'meaning potentials' between image producers, the represented participants or objects in the image, and the viewer. Aligning with the work of Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), Jewitt & Oyama (2001) propose that, in the case of vertical angles, a meaning potential for "symbolic power" (p. 35) is realised. They make two key points in relation to these theoretical assumptions about viewing angles: "First 'power', 'detachment', 'involvement', and so on are not 'the' meanings of these angles. They are an attempt to describe a meaning potential, a field of possible meanings"; and secondly, "Symbolic relations are not real relations and it is precisely this which makes point of view a symbolic resource" (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001; p. 135). Thus, in a cartoon depiction of a religious leader, or a figurehead of Western commerce, viewing angles can as readily imply that, in the context of the discourse, power lies with the viewer when angled as if the viewer is looking down on the represented participant, as they can position power with the represented participant if the viewing angle is upwards.

Relating this to our analysis, viewing angles in the cartoon present Muhammad at eye level with the viewer, hence a meaning potential is afforded in which relations of power are flat.

This meaning potential, coupled with the openness of the image achieved through the central perspective, avails a display of equality between Muhammad, as representative of Islam, and the audience, irrespective of ethnic or religious category membership. We now turn to the textual components of the discourse, before drawing our analysis together and further assessing how the ‘Survivors Issue’ cartoon operates as situated multimodal discourse.

TEXTUAL COMPONENTS

As indicated earlier, alongside the caricature of Muhammad, there are two textual components on the page. The first is a headline, presented in large black handwritten capital letters, located above the head of the prophet. The headline reads ‘TOUT EST PARDONNÉ’ (ALL IS FORGIVEN). The other appears on the placard which the prophet holds in front of his upper torso. Again, the text is presented in handwritten black capital letters, and reads ‘JE SUIS CHARLIE’ (I AM CHARLIE). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) discuss image composition at length, and the ways in which composition of the overall image serves to realize information values. Through detailed examples, they propose that composition serves to connect representational and interactive meanings through three related principles: information value, salience and framing. Drawing on analysis of magazine visuals, Kress and Leeuwen (2006) demonstrate how information values of the left and right differ, with content on the left typically relating to what is already known, or ‘the given’, whilst information values on the right communicate new, or key information. The authors argue that this left (given)/ right (new) composition structure is found in all manner of visuals including composite texts; works of classical art; webpages, and diagrams. In addition to the information values that are linked to the left and right, visual elements which occupy a position toward the ‘top’ of the image are theorised to communicate aspects of the ‘ideal’, whilst elements located as ‘bottom’ convey the ‘real’. Drawing upon examples as diverse as

magazine advertisements, and geography textbooks, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) demonstrate that information values presented toward the top communicate ideals and ideological assumptions about the matter at hand, whilst information values in the lower part of the image convey more mundane details and assumptions of fact. These, in turn, can often serve as forms of support to underpin the assertions offered in the top of the image. Jewitt & Oyama (2001) state that “For something to be ‘ideal’ means that it is presented as the idealized or generalized essence of the information, hence usually also as its ideologically most salient part. The ‘real’ is then opposed to this in that it is its meaning potential to present more ‘down to earth information’ (p. 148). Again, we want to highlight, the concern here is with the meaning potentials which are availed by the composition of the image, irrespective of any assessment of ‘truth’ which might be levied at the content of the discourse. Applying this to our data enables a consideration of how these two textual objects operate in relation to one another, and helps to examine the activity of the text within the multimodal communication.

The Placard

The message on the placard is located way below the other textual message, and toward the bottom of the overall visual, thus it communicates something which can be assessed as ‘real’, or dependable information (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The slogan, ‘I am Charlie’ originally appeared on social media, penned by a French journalist in the hours following the attack. (Devichand, 2016). It proliferated on social media and was adopted by members of the public and mainstream media in France and the West, both as a symbol of support for all those who died in the attack, and as a mark of commitment to maintaining and protecting the rights to free speech, and to a free press. Presenting this message as ‘real’ within this cartoon constructs an unwavering solidarity with the dominant Western response to the Charlie

Hebdo attacks. However, the choice to present this slogan on a placard held by the prophet Muhammad warrants further consideration. Whilst we acknowledge that the represented participant is not the agent, but the medium through which interactive participants (producers and receivers of the visual) communicate (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), the visual organisation of the cartoon nevertheless serves to invest a level of agency in the represented participant. It produces a discourse in which Muhammad, both as an embodied Muslim member, and as originator of Islam, stands in unity with Charlie Hebdo, and with the ideological values reflected in the phrase 'I am Charlie'. Muhammad and all that he stands for is thus posed in opposition to those individuals who undertook the attacks, thereby refuting any reading of their violent acts as being motivated by genuine Islamic values.

It is here we begin to see the complexity of the multimodal work in the cartoon. For all that this cartoon - produced and published by the French magazine in response to a highly emotive episode of direct violence of which it was the victim - seemingly rejects any temptation to respond with a narrative which positions Islam, or Muslims, as the aggressor, or which seeks violent retribution, it does so via very particular means. Whilst the incorporation of the phrase 'Je suis Charlie' held by Muhammad might arguably seek to construct Muslims and non-Muslims as members of a universal group who share common values and reject violence in the name of Islam, the underpinning decision to publish a visual portrayal of the prophet Muhammad can equally be read as a provocative act of ideologically-driven cultural violence. Indeed, such an interpretation is indicated by the appearance of a counter catchphrase, 'Je ne suis pas Charlie', circulated by both Muslims and non-Muslims who deemed Charlie Hebdo's continued publishing of Muhammad cartoons to be reflective, not of free speech, but of hate speech (Brooks, 2015).

The Headline

Turning to the headline, located at the top of the image, this message of forgiveness is presented as the 'ideal', or the core ideological element of the visual (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001). Whilst there is little ambiguity regarding the absolution offered by the words "All is forgiven", there is uncertainty regarding who is offering forgiveness, and who it is being offered to. Here the receiving audience must make a judgement about the intent, or modality, of the message. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.154) state that "In so far as we are prepared to act, we have to trust some of the information we receive, and do so, to quite some extent, on the basis of modality markers." Modality refers to the expectations that might be routinely held regarding the "reality value" of an image (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001). In this sense, naturalistic photographic images have a high modality, as they are widely anticipated to represent 'real life', and reflect 'truth'. Crucially however, modality does not convey certainties of truth or falsehood, rather it constructs shared realities, which variously align or distance members of the audience with aspects of the discourse. Moreover, modality judgements are contextual, "dependent on what is considered real (or true, or sacred) in the social group for which the representation is primarily intended" (p. 156). The issue of modality highlights how the 'ideal' message of forgiveness in this cartoon is both uncertain and open to varied interpretation. In the given context, category membership as either Muslim or non-Muslim is a central factor which potentially influences how this message of forgiveness might be judged, yet, it is not the only factor at play. As Western media responses to the 'Survivors' Issue' front page highlight, there were varying judgements regarding the modality of the message. Headlines in the days following publication (e.g., 'Is all forgiven now?'⁵; 'Charlie Hebdo's strange cover'⁶) indicate a palpable level of uncertainty and suspicion amongst the Western media.

⁵<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-30799770>

⁶http://www.thecommentator.com/article/5531/charlie_hebdo_s_strange_cover

This uncertainty reveals an interesting tension between the visual portrayal of Muhammad, and the textual message ‘Je suis Charlie’, which are treated as relatively straightforward, and the ambiguity of the textual message ‘All is forgiven’. This concern with ambiguity voiced by the Western media is both in terms of questioning the credibility of discourse as a genuine message of forgiveness, and indicating uncertainty about whom is offering forgiveness, and to whom it is offered. It is also interesting to note that amongst the queries of the Western media, concerns are raised which challenge who has the *right* to forgive on behalf of the dead, particularly if the living are deemed to differ from the dead according to categories of religion (see footnote ⁶).

Completing the Multimodal Jigsaw

Our analysis reveals that portrayal of Muhammad in the ‘Survivors Issue’ front page differs from other depictions of Muhammad (c.f. Müller et al., 2009), and from other portrayals of Muslims in general in political cartoons (c.f. Moloney et al., 2013) in ways that construct important affordances for interpretation of the overall discourse. Mazid (2008) notes that the skill of the political cartoon is to arrive a given perspective in a manner laced with satirical humour, often achieved by destabilizing a well-worn schema, or contrasting two schemas to create incongruity. It is notable therefore that this mainstay of political cartoons, is largely absent in our data. The lack of incongruity, or humour either in the clothing, the facial features, or the activities of Muhammad, mark this ‘Survivors Issue’ front page out. We suggest that this reflects the situated nature of the discourse, highlighting the capacity retained by even the most subversive discourse genre, to respond to events in a manner which are deemed appropriate to achieve particular communicative ends, and, in the case of political cartoons, to avoid overstepping a line between challenging moral boundaries and certain moral alienation. Furthermore, given that satirical cartoons typically portray the prophet

Muhammad in ways which are culturally and/or morally offensive, coupled with the fact that connotations between Muslim identity and violent extremism feed a mainstream Western narrative in which Muhammad, and Muslims in general are routinely othered, a cartoon which seemingly ascends this narrative might be deemed to challenge the mainstream discourse. However, as Galtung (1996, p. 197) notes, one way in which cultural violence operates is by “making reality opaque, so that we do not see the violent act or fact”. Such insight appears highly relevant here, reminding us that, whilst the carefully constructed discourse of the ‘Survivors Issue’ front page appears conservative in comparison to other portrayals, the situated layers of contextual meaning are deeper than the components of the page.

Given the explicit reference to forgiveness, we have been concerned to examine how (and if) this cartoon can be understood to communicate a message of peace in the days following the attack on the Charlie Hebdo offices, and to assess how any potential messages of peace might be variously experienced in relation to differing group based identities. The combination of a ‘close-up’ which uses direct gaze to communicate an unambiguous emotion of sorrow, coupled with the maintenance of stereotypical facial features which construct a knowable Muslim ‘other’, affords varying potentials for interpretation linked to ideas about closeness and distance with the represented participant. Furthermore, as Jewitt and Oyama, (2001, p.146) note, a ‘close-up’ does not require a reading in which the person represented is understood to be actually close to us, but that “they are represented as though they belong or should belong to ‘our group’, and the viewer is thereby addressed as a certain kind of person”.

In the context of the events surrounding this cartoon, and with an awareness that a critical group-based category difference amongst the receiving audience is Muslim/ non-Muslim

identity, we suggest that members of these groups might experience the discourse in broadly different ways. (Note however, to do so is not to suggest that either group is homogenous such that all members will experience the discourse in the same way, or that it is impossible for Muslim/ non-Muslim members to interpret the discourse in other ways). For the non-Muslim audience, the close-up of Muhammad advances a narrative whereby the stereotypical physiognomic portrayal of Muhammad *as* a Muslim elevates and maintains the salience of Muslim category membership. However, the strong emotion communicated by Muhammad is one which promotes a narrative of common morality and shared humanity with the capacity to transcend ethnic, cultural or religious category divisions. This universally accessible moral position offers a potential to act as a pivotal ground in which boundaries between Muhammad *as* Muslim and the non-Muslim audience are penetrable. Here, it is possible to at least partly assess this multimodal discourse as one in which tenets of universal common values are presented to a non-Muslim audience as being similarly upheld by Muslim members, whilst also conveying that such values are compatible with Muslim identity. The content of those universal accessible values express a mutual rejection of forms of direct violence witnessed in the Charlie Hebdo attacks, and thereby signal a collective discourse in which peace and forgiveness are central. From this perspective, the Charlie Hebdo response might be judged to be one of restraint, and one which seeks to bring Muslim and non-Muslims together and put violence behind them with peace at the fore.

For the Muslim audience however, things may be a little different. The elevation of Muslim/ non-Muslim category boundaries achieved via the multimodal discourse serve to reinforce the salience of their membership *as* Muslim. The emotional display remains available as a shared resource between the represented participant and the viewer, and as indicated above, this offers a currency of common values to which both Muslim and non-Muslims can align. However, for Muslim members, the deeply held cultural sensitivities to any visual portrayal

of the prophet Muhammad cannot be extricated from this discourse, no matter what the unusually conservative stylistic qualities of that portrayal may be. Recognition of the entrenched debates over visual portrayals of the prophet which have repeatedly divided some Muslim and some non-Muslim members cannot be ignored. These issues are at the heart of the continuing arguments, to which Charlie Hebdo contributed by design through their ongoing visual depictions of Muhammad. Galtung's (1996) discussion of democracies and their varying capacity for bellicism (the general propensity toward engagement in war/ war like acts) might offer some guidance as to why Charlie Hebdo chose to respond to the attacks on 7th January 2015 with yet another portrayal of Muhammad. Such a decision was taken with awareness that it would cause further offense and increased controversy at a time when emotions on all sides were already running high.

Galtung (1996; p.56) notes that members of democracies have a tendency toward extremes of self-righteousness driven by the ideals of the democratic system itself. He states that:

“People living in democracies tend to become self-righteous simply for that reason. If we assume that the leading political system is the system of the world's leading countries then to live in a democracy is prestigious. To live in a non-democracy carries a stigma”.

Thus, the cherished values of democracy, including rights to free speech, coupled with heightened self-righteous beliefs whereby the ideals of Western democracy trump those derived from a religious worldview indicate that cultural violence performed by Western states, such as publishing satirical visual depictions of the prophet Muhammad, is justified in and through the ideology of democracy. Of course, a counter argument would maintain that if rights to free speech were outdone by religious beliefs then another form of cultural violence would prevail. In this sense an ideological dilemma comes to the fore. However, if

democracy is to be revered by those who live according to it as the leading political system, we suggest it is incumbent upon members of democratic societies to carefully consider the social, moral and political responsibilities that freedom of speech must surely entail. Moreover, they should strive to use the tools of democracy, *especially* the power of free speech, in ways which serve to demystify, and to denounce forms of cultural violence wherever they are found.

CONCLUSION

Distinguishing between discourses of peace and discourses of violence might, at first thought, appear to be a relatively straightforward matter, particularly when the textual message speaks expressly of forgiveness. However, as our multimodal analysis is at pains to demonstrate, discourses of peace and violence are ideologically formed and thus, situated concepts. What might present itself as forgiveness from one perspective, may be experienced quite differently from another vantage. In examining this cartoon we hope to offer some insight regarding the complex ways in which multimodal discourse can simultaneously communicate forms of peace and violence. We contend that it is through combined textual and visual affordances that the Charlie Hebdo ‘Survivors Issue’ front page, serves to problematize interpretation; obscure the social, moral and political values embedded in the given ideological stance; and create divisions along the lines of peace and violence.

More broadly, through our analysis, we have strived to demonstrate that there is a need for criticality within discursive approaches to peace psychology which seeks to examine the rhetorical ways in which the language of peace, tolerance, war, and violence is used, with ideology seen as a structuring agent which packages these discourses into recognisable arguments for their situated political ends. Galtung (1996, p. 200) reminds us that whether

violence is direct, structural, or cultural, 'violence breeds violence'. To this we would add that the same is as true when violence is done in discourse as in any other form.

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