Deconstruction and reconstruction: Diversity as a productive resource

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This article uses critical discourse analysis to show that a series of advertisements by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees are premised on a discourse of sameness that constructs difference negatively. The article moves from deconstructing these advertisements to possibilities for reconstruction that show difference as a positive and productive resource.

Introduction

Spot the refugee is one of a series of four advertisements using Lego people published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1998 (see http://www.unhcr.ch/teaching-tools/tchhr/tchr.htm). This article uses critical discourse analysis to show that these advertisements, designed to dispose us kindly to refugees, are premised on a discourse of sameness that constructs difference negatively. Using bel hooks' (1990) theory of marginality as a "a space of resistance" that enables an "oppositional" world view (p. 149) and Kostogriz's (2002) arguments that conflict and tension across difference provide the energy and the resources for "cultural reinvention, transformation and change", the article moves from deconstructing these advertisements to possibilities for reconstruction that show difference as a positive and productive resource. Although the focus of the article is on the UNHCR advertisements and refugee politics, the argument is intended to draw attention to the institutional contexts in which discourses of assimilation and sameness are played out, not least of which is education. While these ideas were developed in relation to language and literacy education concerned with the critical reading of texts, the analysis contributes more broadly to critical multicultural education and the texts themselves could be used in other areas of the curriculum.

The Butterfly Effect: As metaphor

In 1972 Edward Lorenz presented a paper to the American Association for the Advancement of Science entitled "Predictability: Does the flap of a butterfly's wings

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in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?" His theory, which has come to be known as the "butterfly effect" has two main propositions:

1. If a single flap of a butterfly's wings can be instrumental in generating a tornado, so also can all the previous and subsequent flaps of the wings of millions of other butterflies, not to mention the activities of innumerable more powerful creatures, including our own species.
2. If the flap of a butterfly's wings can be instrumental in generating a tornado, it can equally well be instrumental in preventing a tornado (Lorenz, 1972).

The Lorenz attractor drawn in the shape of a butterfly's wings illustrates the ripple effect created by a single flap of the wings (see http://library.thinkquest.org).

I am not qualified to comment on the mathematics of Lorenz' work, which gave birth to chaos theory. However, because I work in language and literacy education, I am schooled in the power of metaphor. Although Lorenz was a meteorologist mapping weather patterns, he asks his audience, in passing, to imagine the consequences of the activities of more powerful creatures, such as ourselves. It is relatively easy to understand that new technologies have transformed the world into a global village where flows of information and people and capital are no longer as constrained by distance as they once were. What seems more difficult to grasp is how our actions "here" generate effects "there". I use "here" and "there" to implicate us all, and to remind us that our "there" is someone else's "here".[1] Colin Lankshear's research shows how a small cooperative in Nicaragua that produced handmade brooms was unable to compete in a free market economy with cheaper, mass-produced, machine-made products imported from the USA (Lankshear, 1996). Naomi Klein's (1999) work shows us the politics behind the brand names that we wear, and reminds us of the sweatshops in which the products are made. Bill Bigelow and Bob Peterson's (2002) book *Rethinking globalization: Teaching for justice in an unjust world* provides us with many examples of what we could call the human-(butterfly) effect. Alan Thein Durning's article (2002, pp. 243–244) in this collection outlines the effects on the environment around the world of drinking just one cup of coffee. My own research (Janks, 2003) has begun to consider the effects that global warming, created by carbon emissions elsewhere, has produced on the food supply in six of South Africa's neighbouring countries, where 10.2 million people are currently at risk of starvation (World Food Programme, 2002). This need to think of local, national, and global communities as interdependent is included in the following generic outcome legislated for all qualifications in South Africa. Learners must be able to demonstrate "an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by understanding that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation" (South African Qualifications Authority Act no. 58, 1995).

We can, I believe, take comfort from Lorenz' second proposition—if our activities can generate "tornados", they can also prevent them. What this suggests is that, as educators, we need to produce students who are capable of both an analysis of existing actions and effects and a commitment to social justice. In my field of

education, literacy, educators focus on a particular kind of social activity: those practices which result in the creation of verbal–visual texts. We need to produce students who understand how texts work to produce effects and how texts can be redesigned to produce different, more positive effects. We need students capable of both deconstruction and reconstruction, students who, in Lorenz's terms, are the "tornado" preventers.

The Choice of UNHCR Texts

Spot the refugee, published in *Newsweek* in 1995, is an advertisement produced by the office of the UNHCR. It is one of a series of four UNHCR Lego advertisements. The other three are: *What's wrong here?*, *How does it feel?* and *What's the difference?*. These advertisements, called "posters" on the UNHCR website (www.unhcr.ch/teaching-tools/tchhr/tchr.htm), were reissued to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, together with a teachers' guide in 1998.

> *To download the posters from the internet go to:*
>   www.unher.org;
>   select the link to www.unher.ch;
>   select the 'publication' link;
>   select the 'teaching tools' links;
>   select 'teacher's tools' links;
>   select 'posters';
>   select each posters by clicking on it, to download and print.
> (See www.unher.org, 2February 2005)

The UNHCR website provides a great deal of information on its establishment and ongoing work.

> The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country. In more than five decades, the agency has helped an estimated 50 million people restart their lives. Today, a staff of around 5,000 people in more than 120 countries continues to help an estimated 19.8 million persons. (www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home?page = basics, accessed 31 October 2002)

The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as a person who

> owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such a fear, is unwilling to avail himself

of the protection of that country. (www.unhcr.ch/teaching-tools/tchhr/tchr.htm, accessed 15 May 2002)

One might ask why anyone would choose to deconstruct a text that espouses such seemingly noble sentiments. Who does not support the work of the UNHCR? What would happen to refugees if the UNHCR were not there to protect their rights and to provide assistance in the form of shelter, food, water, medicines, equipment, clinics, and schools? The answer is simple: it is hard to deconstruct texts that we agree with. It is easy to deconstruct a text that we disagree with. Our own lived experience or our own convictions serve as resources for reading against a text that offends us. Such a text does not appear natural or inevitable and we are able to read it from a position other than that of Stuart Hall's (1980) "ideal reader", from a position outside the presuppositions which formed it. bell hooks (1990, p. 149) explains this outsider view, as a "marginality" that is "a central location for the production of counter-hegemonic discourse that is not just found in words but in habits of being and the way one lives". She sees marginality as a "site of radical possibility, a space of resistance" that provides an "oppositional world view—a mode of seeing unknown to most of our oppressors" (p. 149).

However, when we are confronted by a text that we agree with, it is easy to imagine its positive effects, and hard to see its negative effects. Critical Language Awareness, which focuses on the relationship between language and power, is a resource for thinking about the ways in which a text has been constructed, moment by moment, as the writer or speaker selects from a range of possible language, visual, and gestural options. When we speak or write we have to decide what words to use, whether to include adjectives and adverbs, whether to use the present, the past, or the future tense, whether to use pronouns that are inclusive or exclusive, sexist or non-sexist, whether to join sentences or to leave them separate, how to sequence information, whether to be definite or tentative, approving or disapproving, what gestures to use, what fonts to select, what images to include.

In making choices, we draw on the discourses we inhabit, such that many of the "choices" we make are social choices that are learnt and are often unconscious. Every society has conventions which govern people's behaviour, including their language behaviour. According to Gee (1990),

> at any moment that we are using language, we must say or write the right thing in the right way while playing the right social role and (appearing) to hold the right values, beliefs and attitudes. What is important [are] ... [the] saying(writing)-doing-being-valuing-believing combinations. These combinations I will call Discourses. (p. 142)

Gee would say that we learn the ways of making meaning of the different discourse communities to which we belong. These ways of making meaning become so natural for us that they seem inevitable; simply the way things are meant to be. We stop thinking of them as constructed versions of social realities. Critical language awareness helps us to make the familiar strange, to distance ourselves from a text,

so that like bell hooks (1990, p. 142) we can look "both from the outside in and from the inside out".

Analysis of the UNHCR Lego Advertisements

The analysis begins by focusing on *Spot the refugee*, in order to see how language works to construct refugees, the reader, and the UNHCR. The other three advertisements are considered in order to explore the continuities and differences across the set of Lego advertisements. In *Spot the refugee* an obvious place to begin is with the opening instruction 'SPOT THE REFUGEE' prominent because it is printed in capital letters in a large bold font. This is the only command in a text that is otherwise made up of statements. If you respond to this imperative by looking carefully at the Lego figures, trying to find the one that stands out as a refugee, the text has already constructed you as someone who thinks of refugees as visibly different. If you refuse this construction, but are nevertheless intrigued by the juxtaposition of Lego dolls and refugees, you may start reading the text. If you then look for the refugee in the *Fourth row, second from the left. The one with the moustache*, you will nevertheless have been reeled in by the text, only to discover that you have been cheated, because

> the unsavoury looking character you're looking at is more likely to be your average neighbourhood slob with a grubby vest and a weekend's stubble on his chin. And the real refugee could just as easily be the clean-cut fellow on his left.

In addition, you will have been constructed as someone who assumes that refugees look like "unsavoury", unshaved "slobs". And because you are now someone who sees refugees as both different from and inferior to you, you need to learn that "clean-cut" *refugees are just like you and me*. But do not worry, the UNHCR is there to set us straight.

Already it is clear that the pronouns chosen are doing interesting work. First, the refugee is referred to as "he" and is constructed as just like "you and me" (the reader and the writer, who represents the UNHCR). Having denied any diversity, reinforced by the supposed sameness of the Lego dolls, the text immediately sets up a difference, introduced by the word "except" and encoded in us/them pronouns.

> Except for one thing. Everything *they* once had has been left behind. Home, family, possessions all gone. *They* have nothing. And nothing is all *they'll* ever have unless *we* all extend a helping hand. (My emphasis)

"We" is used here to include the reader and the writer and to exclude refugees. In the very next sentence "we" is used exclusively.

> *We* know you can't give *them* back the things that others have taken away. *We're* not even asking for money (though every penny certainly helps). But *we* are asking that *you* keep an open mind. And a smile of welcome. It may not seem like much. But to a refugee it can mean everything. (My emphasis)

Here "we" refers to the UNHCR only. The UNHCR is constructed as knowing what *can mean everything* to a refugee. The reader is in need of instruction on how to

behave, and refugees are given no agency and no voice. This sets up the very social divide that the early part of the text is at pains to refute.[2]

Moreover, the text exonerates all of us—unnamed others are blamed for the plight of refugees. Divorced from history and geography, from socio-political and economic conditions, and from the ugly specifics of racial, ethnic, and religious Othering, the fact that the UNHCR is currently responsible for more than 19 million refugees around the world is presented simply as a state of affairs, with undefined causes and inevitable effects.

The use of pronouns is also interesting, because of the way in which it presents the refugee as male, this despite the fact that 80% of refugees are women and children (www.unhcr.ch, accessed 15 May 2002). The gender stereotyping is reinforced in the visual images, where women tend to be shown without the occupation markers of the male figures and with jewellery. If one looks across the four advertisements, it is possible to see how this is further exaggerated in *What's wrong here?*, where 5 of the 20 dolls are women, 3 of whom have cleaning and gardening implements, 1 of whom has a bicycle and 1 of whom is carrying what could be tool boxes. The men figures have tools, motorbikes, and megaphones; there is a chef, a barman, a cowboy, a pirate, a cameraman, porters. The refugee who is now portrayed visually as having nothing, to echo the verbal statement to this effect, is a man. In *How does it feel?*, although the refugee appears to be a man with a hint of a moustache, there appear to be as many women as men because helmets and occupational headgear have been replaced by caps and hats, which are more gender neutral.

Here the text shifts. Addressing readers directly, it calls for a sympathetic imagination. How would you feel if,

> without warning, your whole world changes. Overnight, lifelong neighbours become lifelong enemies. Tanks prowl the streets and buses burn. Mortar shells shatter the mosques. Rockets silence the church bells. Suddenly everything you've owned and loved is gone and, if you're lucky enough to survive, you find yourself alone and bewildered in a foreign land. You are a refugee.

Here for the first time, readers are provided with some of the details of the fear, the violence, the enmity, and the threat to survival that refugees have to confront. The visual image works well to capture the refugee's sense of isolation. One of the ways of building on a personal how-do-we-feel-when-we-read-a-text response is to ask students to think about what the text wants them to feel, how the choice of words and images makes them feel this, and why?

Each of these texts is a new design, a textual reconstruction. Together they illustrate the infinity of possibilities available to text designers and how each design is constructed by a set of specific choices. *What's the difference?* shows only female Lego dolls. Here, all the dolls are identical and all but two represent refugees. Here "nasty names" are used—*parasite*, *criminal*, *foreign trash*, *pig*, *trouble maker*, *freeloader*, *vermin*, *slacker*, *scum*—to show the treatment that refugees receive. In South Africa the disparaging word for foreign Africans is "makwerekwere"—I will return to this later. The jewellery, suggestive of strings of pearls, is a Western class and gender

marker and although it is probably included to reinforce the idea that *refugees are just like you and me*, it contradicts the refrain that refugees have nothing. The text continues the plea for readers to imagine what refugees feel and how they would feel in a similar situation.

> While our homes are safe and our rights protected, their homes have been destroyed, and any rights have been swept away by violence and hatred—and they've been living in constant fear for their very lives. That's why they are refugees. Of course they wish they were back home—wouldn't you?

But here for the first time the text makes explicit reference to the historical conditions that have produced and continue to produce refugees.[3]

> So please, don't get mad at refugees. Instead, save your breath for the situation that made them refugees.

This is the only text that invites us to think of the situations such as Bosnia, Kosova, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, East Timor, Afghanistan, and Palestine, amongst others, where millions of human beings have been killed or uprooted. When one begins to think of concrete situations, one can begin to think about causes. Only then can we consider how our own countries are implicated and which of our activities have produced these effects elsewhere? What activities might be needed to prevent this "tornado" of human suffering? How should our own countries' political and economic policies change so that the world is a safer place for everyone? What small things might each of us do that could contribute to change. Small actions, like the flap of a butterfly's wings, have ripple effects.

The Discourse of Sameness

The premise that underpins all four advertisements is that people are all basically the same. John Thompson's (1984, 1990) five modes of operation of ideology: reification, legitimation, dissimulation, unification, and fragmentation, are useful for making sense of this text and in the process its discourse of sameness.

We have already considered how *Spot the refugee* presents us with a general decontextualized picture of refugees. This is what Thompson calls reification, where an "historical state of affairs" is represented "as if it were permanent, natural, outside of time" (Thompson, 1990, p. 65). Here ever increasing numbers of refugees are presented as a fact of life, not as an effect of human actions. The UNHCR is legitimated as a "strictly humanitarian organisation" that is "responsible for more than 19 million refugees". That it is not State funded and that it operates around the world, wherever there are refugees, further legitimates it as a non-partisan organization.

Dissimulation is the process by which relations of domination are concealed or obscured. Ignoring the differences between people, between, for example, readers of *Newsweek* and refugees living in camps, is a classic example of dissimulation. This dissimulation leaves us unperturbed by the inequalities between the political North and the political South, between rich and poor, between people who have access to

food and fresh water and people who do not, between educated and uneducated, between people on opposite sides of the digital divide, between men and women.

Thompson's last two modes of operation of ideology, unification and fragmentation, are related processes in that they work in opposite directions—the one seeks to unite and join people for ideological purposes while the other seeks to split people off from one another. Unification establishes a collective identity which unites individuals despite their differences. Fragmentation is a process of splitting people off from one another despite their similarities, in order to divide and rule. Unity is the means of establishing an "us"; fragmentation is tied to this process of unification, as a collective identity is partly forged by the construction of an Other or Others, a "them" who are different from "us". It is the dehumanization made possible by racial, religious, or ethnic Othering, that enables people to brutalize and violate one another (see Table 1).

Instead, the UNHCR advertisement appeals to our common humanity, an attempt at unification that produces a text built on a fundamental contradiction: we are the same, except that we are different. It is ironic that the sameness is achieved by the use of look-alike dolls, which represent human beings as children's playthings, as manipulable toys, a profound objectification that robs us all of life and agency. It is an unfortunate visual metaphor. We need a way of thinking about our flesh and blood diversity that produces positive effects and that sees diversity as a "productive resource for innovation" (Kress, 1995), as something to value. This is the consideration that I will end with after I have examined the situation that confronts refugees in my own context.

Table 1. Thompson's modes of operation of ideology applied to *Spot the Refugee*

Thompson's modes of operation of ideology		Spot the refugee
States of affairs presented as natural, outside of time (history), space, and social processes.	Reification	Ever increasing numbers of refugees are presented as a fact of life, not as an effect of human actions.
Represents something as legitimate and therefore worthy of support.	Legitimation	The UNHCR is legitimated as a non-partisan, "strictly humanitarian organization".
Relationships of domination are concealed, denied, obscured.	Dissimulation	Real social, political and economic inequalities between people are hidden in this text, as is human diversity.
Form of unity which establishes a collective identity irrespective of difficulties and divisions.	Unification	Refugees are just like you and me: we are all the same.
Separates people into different groups often to divide and rule.	Fragmentation	Refugees are different: they have nothing.

Historically Located Refugees

It is important to think about real refugees in actual contexts, rather than as a generalized category of people. I will look at my own context, in the hope that it will spur readers to consider their contexts. On 27 October 2002 the *Sunday Independent* published an article in South Africa entitled "No place here for refugees fleeing Africa's tyrants" (*Sunday Independent*, 15 May 2002a). The article focuses on a range of abuses of refugees in South Africa. These abuses include:

- whipping and beating of refugees outside and within home affairs offices, with chains and sjamboks (whips);
- practices that prevent refugees from registering, making them permanent fugitives from the law;
- policies that render the most vulnerable refugees, those who risk death or torture if they return, incapable of studying or finding work for periods of up to 6 months;
- members of the South African defence force picking up refugees and depositing them back at the border.

Current legal actions against the Department of Home Affairs brought by human rights organizations include allegations of corruption, including bribes paid to officials (*Sunday Independent*, 15 May 2002b). R450 buys an asylum seeker permit and for between R1000 and R6000 refugees have been told they can receive South African identity documents.

Adegoke's (1999) research provides us with a critical analysis of representations in the South African press of foreign African countries and of foreign Africans living within or outside South Africa. Her research involved a critical discourse analysis of media texts collected during May 1998 from *The Star*, the *Mail and Guardian* and *The Sowetan*, three South African newspapers with high circulations in the Johannesburg region. These papers are aimed at different racialized and class-based readerships. "The study revealed that the predominant press discourses on foreign Africans in South Africa are systematically negative and xenophobic, as well as racialised" (Adegoke, 1999, p. iii). Adegoke established a set of conceptual frames for organizing the topics of the articles analysed. Table 2, taken from Adegoke, lists the 10 frames with the highest frequency of occurrence in the 296 articles on foreign African countries (p. 95).

According to Adegoke, an analysis of these frames "shows a pre-occupation with chaos and anarchy, brutality and violence in African countries" and a "bestial nature or lifestyle for foreign Africans"; in addition, the focus on corruption and crime constructs Africa as a place of "fraud" and "self serving interests" (Adegoke, 1999, p. 96).

Adegoke argues that the generally negative discourse on foreign African countries relates to the xenophobic discourse in relation to foreign Africans in South Africa. Table 3 shows immigration and crime as the two frames that make up 76% of the 38 articles on foreign Africans.

Table 2. Frames used for representing foreign African countries in Adegoke (1999)

Frames	Number of occurrences	Percentage of total
War and violence	37	12.5%
Foreign relations	30	10.1%
Sports	26	8.8%
Economic crisis	20	6.8%
Dictatorship	19	6.4%
Civil unrest and riots	18	6.1%
Economic advancement	16	5.4%
Corruption and crime	15	5.1%
Total	191	61.2%

Table 3. Frames used for representing foreign Africans in South Africa in Adegoke (1999)

Frames	Number of occurrences	Percentage of total
Immigration and problems	15	39.5%
Crime	14	36.5%
Total	29	76%

According to Adegoke

> African foreigners in South Africa are often represented in the South African press as burdens and criminals or as victims of crime. They "flood" the country and use up resources, creating a social and economic burden for South African taxpayers. Thousands of them come in "illegally", some "obtaining citizenship fraudulently". African foreigners are behind major crimes in South Africa such as drug dealing. . . . Even where a report represents foreign Africans as victims of crime [what is accentuated] is that they are often in the environment of or scene of a crime—"found dead or injured". (Adegoke, 1999, p. 107)

In 2002, despite President Mbeki's vision of an African Renaissance, we continue to witness State abuse of asylum seekers (*Sunday Independent*, 15 May 2002b) and the continued Othering encoded in the street construction of foreign Africans as "makwerekwere".[4] Joe Khumalo, a satirical columnist in *Pace* magazine, written for a black South African market, puts it thus.

> Ke mohlola![5] What does a black man get for being a darkie in a dark continent? Absolutely bogger-all my bra.[6] . . . When Eloff Street was crawling with mulungus,[7] you wanted to drive them to the sea. But now that Eloff Street is awash with black-blue darkies from up north, you claim that there are too many darkies around here. (2002, p. 144)

Adegoke concludes her research with an argument that education should see xenophobia as an issue that needs to be addressed. I would argue that discourses of sameness fail to address this.

Diversity as a Productive Resource

Alexander Kostogriz, in a doctoral thesis entitled *Rethinking ESL literacy education in multicultural conditions*, offers us a way forward. Building on the work of bell hooks (1990), Homi Bhabha (1990) and Edward Soja (1996), he theorizes a space of radical openness in which a "dialogic affirmation of difference" (Kostogriz, 2002, p. 155), "semiotic border crossing" (p. 155), and the dynamics of cultural hybridity (p. 155) provide the resources for disrupting our taken-for-granted discourses and for imagining new possibilities. He argues for a "thirdspace" that cuts across the binaries of "us" and "them" and enables the production of new meanings based on our "diverse semiotic resources and funds of knowledge" (p. 237). He sees cultural collisions as a driving force that enables us to remediate and re-present the world (p. 237) and that produces the creative energy necessary for transformation and change. For Kostogriz, as migrants learn new languages and assume new identities they have to find their way through the often incommensurate discourses that they inhabit.

> This tension leads to the articulation of new emergent possibilities of cultural reinvention, transformation and change in educational settings and in wider socio-cultural spheres of life. The productive force of thirding and hybridity then becomes a key issue in the cultural making of new practices, meanings and discourses. (2002, p. 5)

So, to speak of refugees as having nothing and to imagine that "nothing is all they'll ever have unless we extend a helping hand" fundamentally devalues the knowledges, skills, and values that they have to offer. The emphasis on what refugees have lost, created by five repetitions as well as over-lexicalization, places an undue emphasis on material possessions and not enough on the fullness of the human resources that they bring. A transformative reconstruction is needed. To mark its 50th anniversary the UNHCR itself produced advertisements that differ significantly from their Lego ads. The *50 million success stories* advertisements provide us with a positive construction of refugees and, in an understated way, tell us that refugees have made and can make a significant contribution.[8] One of these advertisements is a full-page portrait of supermodel Alek Wek, once a refugee from the Sudan, and another is a portrait of Madeleine Albright, the first woman Secretary of State in the USA, once a refugee from Czechoslovakia. The verbal thumbnail descriptions attached to these portraits are designed to show that refugees can become successful. Madeleine Albright's own words remind us of the ways we are formed by where we have come from.

> I have always felt that my life has been strengthened and enriched by my heritage and my past. ... To be able to look forward to the future while standing in the shadow of the past is a very special thing. (*Marie Claire*, 2002).

It is not, however, enough to recognize that refugees can contribute meaningfully to society and that the different perspectives they bring are a resource. Awareness is not enough; critical education needs also to produce transformative action. As educators, we need to know what "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) our students bring as well as how to use them. We need to provide our

students with a lived experience of difference, where they experience difference as a resource for ideas, for creativity, for new ways of being in the world. Deconstruction is also not enough. If we use deconstruction to reveal the power of discursive representations and the interests they serve, then we have a responsibility to imagine with our students ethical possibilities for change and reconstruction. It is not enough just to redesign texts, we also have to redesign the material practices that they work to produce. And we need to do these things in the hope that the collective flap of our wings will make the global village a place of home for all.

Notes

1. Janks' use of "our" and "we" in this article is used to position the writer alongside the reader and to suggest that we are all implicated. We all have a responsibility with regard to the issues raised.
2. In this analysis I have focused on the use of pronouns, and to some extent on lexical selections. An examination of the other linguistic features that produce ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning is also informative. The use of transitivity shows that the refugee is constructed predominantly with relational processes of "being" and "having", whereas the reader and the UNHCR are constructed with very few relational processes. They are given both mental and material processes and the UNHCR, in addition, is given verbal processes. They are shown acting. The UNHCR is the only participant that speaks. Statements providing information are used throughout. Almost all are in the present tense and are categorical. Modality is used to create uncertainty only about our ability to recognize or understand the needs of refugees. The logic of the text is maintained by the way in which information is sequenced. Additive conjunctions predominate with two noticeable varia-tions—the use of "except" to signify the shift to the one thing that differentiates refugees, and the use of "but" to underscore how important people's attitudes are to a refugee. Finally, an analysis of theme shows movement in the text from the refugee to you (the reader), to possessions thematized four times and expressed as everything and as nothing, back to the reader (and his or her attitude)—"a smile of welcome" is thematized twice, once with the pronoun "it". The text concludes with the UNHCR in theme position. The bottom right hand corner of the text, the prime position for new information, is reserved for the UNHCR.
3. In the mass of teaching materials on the UNHCR website that are based on these four posters I could find only ONE activity on causes that related to actual socio-historical contexts. In the material designed for 15–18 year olds, students are asked to:

    i.   explain the causes leading to the increase in asylum seekers in the world;
    ii. give examples of countries that asylum seekers have come from and gone to;
    iii. find the underlying patterns in these flows of people (see www.unhcr.ch/teaching-tools/tchhr/tchr.htm).

4. "Makwerekwere" is an insulting word for foreign Africans. It is derived from the unfamiliar sounds of their languages; "kwerekwere" refers to the sounds that people who do not speak these languages hear.
5. What a surprise!
6. My brother.
7. "Mulungu" is the isiZulu word for white people.
8. In Janks (2000), I make the point that each new design is also a contruction open to further critique. In this case, one should note that these success-story advertisements present a Western version of success while dissimulating the trauma, misery and hardship experienced

by refugees, many of whom work for poor and often exploitative wages in their host countries. They too make an important contribution to the economies of these countries.

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