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EDITORIAL

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With the rapid advancement in communication, commerce, travel and further afield, our world has been rendered smaller and people more interrelated. At the same time, however, the global village has become, not safer, more stable or more harmonious, but more alienated, more volatile and more unpredictable. Addressing the recent 72nd United Nations General Assembly, the US President Trump touts the 'America First' policy and threatens 'to totally destroy North Korea'. The post-Cold-War era has undergone vast and deep changes, where, for example, the emergence of several major regional and transnational players and partnerships has tipped the good old world order of power structure and brought about new possibilities of reform to global governance. And yet, the old wisdom of dividing up the international community and suppressing the Other so as to retain global hegemony dies hard. Consequently, all forms of neo-realism, neo-colonialism, neo-conservatism, neo-liberalism, militarism (neo-imperialism), nationalism, populism, racism, neo-fascism, separatism, protectionism, terrorism, etc. dance with it. The mainstream media serve only to sustain or justify the existing world order (Hellman and Wagnasson 2015; Hotchkiss 2010).

Our intellectual community would be expected to take a different, rational, and critical approach to this unfortunate state. And more much, it is supposed to create viable means to resist against this geopolitical division of the planet, find peaceful resolutions to the conflict, and ultimately help build a shared, prosperous and harmonious international and intercultural community. The reality seems to the contrary, regrettably: the mainstream scholarship concerned with international and intercultural relations and, notably, international security and defense, has more often than not colluded with the continued Orientalist, Cold War system of discourse (Shi-xu 2015a). Here, it is not uncommon to take hegemonic, ethnocentric and biased views of the world order, to categorize the humanity into the 'civilized' and the 'barbarian', and to tell one-sided stories of (in)security, conflict, or war. Here too, it is not unusual to label some non-western countries as 'regional hegemon', 'failed state', 'rogue régime', 'dictatorship', etc., against the backdrop of the 'just' and 'free' world. But whose category? From whose perspective? Whose voice and language, suppressing whose else? In whose interest and for what purpose? With what consequences? Well, many an author has already found answers (e.g. Das 2015; Den Boer 2008; Dunmire 2009, 2015; Hagström and Hanssen 2016; Hunter and MacDonald 2017a; Ivie 2016; Kelly 2017; Pretorius and Sauer 2014; Ratner 2011; Schlosser 2006; Shi-xu 2015a; Smolash 2009; Turner 2013).

In this Editorial, I'd like to caution that nobody is immune to this powerful, dominant and repressive system of discourse, not even contributors to this journal; one may

inadvertently get ensnared and effectively become an accomplice. Therefore, especially those of us committed to the project of Cultural Discourse Studies (CDS hereafter) must perforce be constantly self-reflective and on guard against ethnically and culturally exclusionary, repressive and discriminatory discourses, whether or not on security, defense, development, the environment, immigration, asylum, welfare, trade and commerce.

In the past two decades, discourse and culture-oriented approaches to geopolitical issues in general and to national and international, as well as human, security in particular have thrived (Aradau and Van Munster 2010; Barry, Buzan and Wæver 1995; Buzan and Hansen 2009; Debrix 2003; Guerrero-Castro 2013; Hansen 2006; Herschinger 2016; Kirchner and Sperling 2010; Neumann 2010; Nye 1990; Pamment 2016). Scholars have put forward a plethora of research suggestions as well as policy and practice proposals: to clarify and critique discursive conceptions of security (e.g. Græger 2005; Hunter and Mac-Donald 2017b; Onoja 2014); to study changes in security discourse and find their historical regularities (Bilgrin 2005; Cheeseman 1999; Kassianova 2001); to employ integrated and contextual approaches to international relations and security (Meyer 1995); to compare linguistic or mediational differences in security discourse between different nations (Hotchkiss 2010; Thornborrow 1993); to explore limits of discourses of security and create new possibilities (e.g. Chandler 2009, 2010; Dalby 1992; Kenkel 2006; McDonald 2005), to name but a few (see also examples supplied by Taylor and Bean, this issue).

Yet, it ought to be pointed out that much of this body of work still suffers, on the one hand, from informal and inexplicit use of the term 'discourse' and consequently confusion with respect to its referents under consideration and, on the other hand, from binary, narrow, oft mono-disciplinary (e.g. linguistic or mediational) approaches and as a result limited utility of the findings and suggestions.

Cultural Discourse Studies, whose project this journal is dedicated to, takes a holistic, dialectic and cultural-power minded, perspective and defines discourse as situated social practice in which interactants accomplish social tasks by using language as well as other symbolic means through particular communicative mediums (e.g. writing, speaking, the Internet) in given historical and cultural relations. Very importantly, discourse is culturally diversified and contested in the sense that historically evolved human communities of discourse both are influenced by particular sets of ways of thinking, concepts, norms and values, identities, perceptions, patterns of behavior, strategies of action, institutional conditions, etc. and, at the same time, do (re)construct such in and through discourse and that these sets are however not fixed or reified but in competing relations with those of other discursive communities. As both ideational and material configuration of social practice, discourse is an instantiation of particular culture and history and, as 'soft' power, can become 'hard' power as well. It should be added, too, that, in the present cultural conception of human discourses, the world order characterized and defined by the cultural systems and relations that organize human discourses is not doomed to pernicious and permanent strife, but will progress to a higher level of civilization following each epochal round of cultural contestation and transformation (cf. Shi-xu 2015b). In this view, then, war and violence are not inevitable; peace and security, common and sustainable, are both possible.

So, how would CDS go about the perplexing and perilous division and disorder of human cultures? The enduring objective of CDS, as both a cultural-intellectual movement and a new paradigm in discourse studies, remains to facilitate, through research,

the building of a pluralist, free and equitable community of human cultures, as has been stipulated in its various documentations (Shi-xu 2006, 2009, 2015b, 2016). This strategic objective, under the new circumstances alluded to at the outset, calls for a number of specific urgent tasks to be accomplished. First, it is imperative to align and mobilize a new and sizable international community of scholars and students of diverse disciplinary and cultural backgrounds who are culturally conscious, critical and creative in order to transform the study of international and intercultural relations, politics and security. Second, this new breed of scholars and students must utilize various platforms and channels to shape, consolidate and promulgate, far more than ever before, a collective vision of a future world of shared human destiny and at the same time select, search and invent practical pathways to reach that goal, as we begin to do in the present Special Issue and in a previous one marking the 70th anniversary of WWII, guest-edited by Ivie (2016). To that end, teachers and students must de-learn the received and familiar patterns of thought and draw on wisdoms from different, especially non-western, cultures (Gunaratne 2013; Shelton 2013; Schneider 2014). Third, they must establish and employ relevant frameworks and standards in order to more critically examine and to guide practices of international and intercultural relations, politics, diplomacy, security, development and other related issues. This implies that they must try to identify and subvert culturally divisive, discriminatory and domineering discourses on the one hand, and to discover and promote culturally inclusive, dialogical and harmonious ones on the other hand. Fourth, they must compare discourses of peace, security, defense and such like of different countries in order to find both commonality and differences, such that the countries involved can better understand and learn from one another and that the nature and use of 'universal' values or 'international' norms can be discussed and renegotiated.

In conclusion, consistent with the overarching objective and contingent tasks outlined above, a set of principles, or guidelines, of action is in order, provisionally as follows:

- To take a holistic, comprehensive and culturally conscious, critical and creative approach to discourses of international politics and security;
- To engage with public, professional or policy discourses, not merely as textual forms or representations, but also as socio-economic, cultural, institutional relations of power under which meanings are produced and consumed;
- To take a balanced, inclusive and modest stance on international and intercultural dispute, conflict or contestation and oppose hegemonic, exclusionary and biased attitudes;
- To look for common ground while tracing differences between human cultures;
- To forester multilateral dialogue and give due attention to native, local and authentic experiences and concerns;
- To take precaution against 'mainstream' views or 'popular' opinions;
- To refrain from ethnocentric, provocative or demonizing language with regard to particular nations, cultures or sociopolitical systems.

Disclosure statement

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