

# 4

## Representing People: Language and Identity

This chapter deals with the naming and visual representation of persons. As with any other kinds of use of linguistic or visual semiotic resources, the communicator has a range of choices available to them for deciding how they wish to represent individuals and groups of people who in CDA are often termed as 'social actors' or 'participants'. In CDA this realm of semiotic choices are referred to as 'representational strategies' (Fowler, 1991; Van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 2003: 145). These choices allow us to place people in the social world and to highlight certain aspects of identity we wish to draw attention to or omit. Like lexical and iconographical choices in general, they can have the effect of connoting sets of ideas, values and sequences of activity that are not necessarily overtly articulated. In this chapter we begin with linguistic resources for representing persons and then move on to visual communication.

### Representational strategies in language

In any language there exists no neutral way to represent a person. And all choices will serve to draw attention to certain aspects of identity that will be associated with certain kinds of discourses. For example, consider the following sentence:

Muslim man arrested for fraudulently claiming benefits.

In fact there are many other possibilities that could have been used to characterise the man: an Asian man, a British man, a Midlands man, a local office worker, a Manchester United supporter, a father of two young daughters, a man named Mazar Hussein. Each of these can serve psychological, social and political purposes for the writer and reader (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 47). This is shown in the following sentence:

Father of two daughters arrested for fraudulently claiming benefits.

In this second case the meaning is different. In the first example the headline locates the story in a news frame emphasising his 'otherness', hence the man is part of something that is problematic. From 2005 in Britain, after bombings on the London transport system, Muslims often became represented through news frames that emphasised their threat to British society and resistance to cultural values (Richardson, 2007). Since the man was born in Britain, the headline could equally have stated that he was a British man. But this would have appeared odd and would have suggested 'one of us'. Crime reporting usually involves creating moral 'others', so that the perpetrator is not like 'us' (Wykes, 2001; Mayr and Machin, 2012). The second headline, which humanises the man by referring to him as a 'father', has the opposite effect. Here he is 'one of us'. One possible effect on the reader may be that the fraud in this case was understandable, as the man was struggling to look after his children.

Van Dijk (1993) has shown that how the news aligns us alongside or against people can be thought of as what he calls 'ideological squaring'. He shows how texts often use referential choices to create opposites, to make events and issues appear simplified in order to control their meaning. Representational choices will always bring associations of values, ideas and activities, such as whether we describe a group of 18 year-olds as 'young people', 'youths', or 'students'. We can see this in the following sentences:

The students hung around outside the shop.

The youths hung around outside the shop.

An author might use the second of these to hint at anti-social behaviour or at disrespect. Teo (2000) carried out an analysis of the representation of drug dealers in sectors of the Australian press. He found evidence of overlexicalisation of words emphasising that the protagonists were young:

'looks and sounds like is he is about 13', 'The 16 year old', 'five other youths', 'two young Asian gang members', 'some as young as 12', 'these kids', 'their leader at 13', 'had beaten two murder charges by 17', 'at least two of the accomplices were of the same age (i.e. 13 and 14)' (Teo, 2000: 21)

On the one hand, Teo suggests that such facts about age would be expected if this is part of the facts of the story. But on the other hand, why do we find this excessive use of terms related to youth? Of course emphasising youth in this way can be seen as one way to create sympathy for them. Youth, and specifically childhood, is often used in the press as a synonym for innocence and vulnerability. Teo, however, rejects that 'youth' is used as a mitigating factor; rather it serves to add to the moral panic about drugs. 'The kids are out of control.' 'What is society coming to?' 'We need greater discipline, law and order in this society.' All these are common news themes that in fact serve to distract from actual concrete social processes and issues to do with drugs and drug dealing.

In the kind of news texts analysed by Teo, the participants are often evaluated not on the basis of what they do but through representational strategies. In this case, the young people may have been from deprived areas with many social problems. But the author/paper chooses to silence these aspects of who they are to foreground their youth, thereby signifying a specific discourse which suggests a threat to the moral order.

Van Dijk (1993) provides the example of different referential strategies in the reporting of sexual assaults in the press. Where a man is considered guilty, he will be referred to as a 'sex fiend', 'monster' or 'pervert'. In this case, he will *attack* innocent women who will be referred to as 'mother', 'daughter' or 'worker'. However, where the man is considered innocent, the referential strategy will be different. In this case, the woman will be referred to as a 'divorcee' or through physical features such as 'blonde' or 'busty'. In this case, she will have *provoked* an innocent man, referred to as 'hubby', 'father of four' or 'worker'. In this way, the referential strategy becomes part of the way we perceive people and their actions. A number of writers (e.g. Clark, 1992; Zeynep, 2007) have shown how such referential strategies in newspapers reveal some important ideological means through which women are represented in the press, demonstrating they are not considered as individuals but are judged against a Madonna-whore set of standards relating to appearances, motherhood and family. Crucially, these labels help to implicitly define the nature of the crime, victimhood, guilt and consequences for the reader.

## Classification of social actors

To help us to be more systematic when describing referential choices, Van Leeuwen (1996) offers a comprehensive inventory of the ways that we can classify people and the ideological effects that these classifications may have. Later we will apply these to a series of examples in actual texts. But first we explain the kinds of observations they allow us to make.

## Personalisation and impersonalisation

We can ask to what extent the participant is personalised or impersonalised. This can be observed in the following two sentences:

Professor John Smith requires academic staff to give notification of strike action.

The university requires academic staff to give notification of strike action.

In the second case, impersonalisation is used to give extra weight to a particular statement. It is not just a particular person but a whole institution

that requires something. This conceals certain issues. We could argue that the staff, along with the students, *are* the university, so how could it be that the university can tell them what to do? But here this has been phrased in a way that giving notification may be in the interests of the university as a whole. We often come across the same process when politicians say 'Our nation believes...' or 'Britain will not be held responsible...'. This serves to conceal who actually believes what and who is responsible in each case. In the EMDA example in Chapter 2 (see p. 33) on lexis analysis, we read of 'the goals of the Regional Economic Strategy'. These goals, however, have their origins in a particular political organisation. The Strategy is not the holder of the goals, but is itself a set of goals established by particular interests.

## Individualisation versus collectivisation

It is also useful to consider how participants are described as individuals or as part of a collectivity, as is shown in the following sentences:

Two soldiers, privates John Smith, and Jim Jones, were killed today by a car bomb.

Militants were killed today by a car bomb.

In the first case, by being named, these soldiers are individualised, bringing us closer to them. In the second case, the militants are simply a generic group. In the following example we can see how additional referential information individualises the participants in the first sentence even further:

Two soldiers, privates John Smith, and Jim Jones, both fathers of two daughters, were killed today by a car bomb.

This information allows us to feel empathy with the soldiers. We can see the confusing effect of this in the following sentence, as we are not normally given personal details of participants classified as terror suspects because these details would humanise them:

Terror suspects, both fathers of two daughters, were killed today by a car bomb.

It is useful to ask which kinds of participants are individualised and which are collectivised in texts, as we reveal which group is humanised.

## Specification and genericisation

We can also look at whether participants are represented as specific individuals or as a generic type. In our earlier example, we saw that the person accused

of benefits fraud could be either named or identified as a type. Consider the following two sentences:

A man, Mazar Hussein, challenged police today.

A Muslim man challenged police today.

In the second case, the man who challenged the police is represented as a type. The generic category 'Muslim' can place this story into a news frame where Muslims are a contemporary problem in Britain, either because of their extremism or their cultural and religious 'otherness'. However, this man may not even have been a practising Muslim. It could be like saying 'Christian John Smith challenged police today'. The use of such generic terms that can be used to give a newspaper story a 'racialised' slant, even though the newspaper itself may distance itself from a racist stance.

## Nomination or functionalisation

Participants can be nominated in terms of who they are or functionalised by being depicted in terms of what they do. For example:

George Bush said that democracy would win.

The American president said that democracy would win.

This can have different effects. Use of functionalisation can sound more official, whereas nomination can sound more personal. Functionalisation can also reduce people to a role which may in fact be assigned by the writer or be generic, for example:

The demonstrator was injured outside the embassy.

The defendant was warned by Judge Peter Smithely-Smigely to be quiet.

In these cases the 'demonstrator' and 'the defendant' are partially dehumanised by referring to them with functionalisation, which highlights only their roles. Had both of these been named and been further personalised by referring to them, for example, as 'mothers', we would have evaluated them differently.

Functionalisation can also connote legitimacy. Machin and Mayr (2007), in their analysis of representations of multiculturalism in a British regional newspaper, showed that functionalisations, in the form of people's occupation, such as 'shop owner' and 'office workers', served to positively evaluate people as legitimate and 'decent' members of a local community. Those who were not so legitimate were represented in generic terms such as 'one local'.

Of course functionalisation can itself be an attempt to define what someone actually does. In a *Daily Mail* anti-immigration story, we find the following line:

A teenage scribbler in a liberal Sunday newspaper, who normally seems to write reasonable sense, virtually accused me of being a neo-Nazi.

The author of the text does not name the journalist who has criticised him, but uses the pejorative functionalisation 'teenage scribbler'. The author also uses a technique pointed out by Van Dijk (1991) for the denial of racism, where he first states that he normally has no problem with this person, but in this case he does, pointing out that he is not normally biased. Denial of racism is often worded along the following lines:

I normally I have no problems with ethnic minorities but in this case...

It is also worth pointing out that 'but' works as a presuppositional trigger (Levinson, 1983).

## Use of honorifics

The way people are represented through what they do can also be achieved through the use of 'functional honorifics'. These are terms that suggest a degree of seniority or a role that requires a degree of respect. These will normally involve official roles, such as 'President', 'Lord', or 'Judge'. In short, these signal the importance of a social actor or specialisation. We might find that different ideological accounts of the same set of events will see honorifics ascribed or withheld. In the following two sentences, the level of importance of the statement changes.

A government spokesperson said yesterday that there was no official involvement in the affair.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs said yesterday that there was no official involvement in the affair.

In the second case, the use of the functional honorific makes the speaker appear more important and authoritative. A person's level of authority can be strategically diminished by removing honorifics and making them sound more generic, as is the case in the first sentence.

## Objectivation

Here participants are represented through a feature:

‘A ball of fun’ for a baby

‘A beauty’ for a woman

This means that participants can be reduced to this feature. A tabloid newspaper might refer to a woman throughout an article as ‘the Beauty’ rather than naming or functionalising her. In this case, we might argue that she is reduced to her physical appearance and her ‘womanness’ becomes the key part of who she is. This can be found often in ideological squaring, where a female participant, whether she is involved in a legal or personal matter, is represented only through being a woman. In such cases we can ask what is backgrounded by this process. Van Dijk (1995) shows how this means that certain moral issues can be connoted by what is reasonable behaviour for a woman rather than for a man. For example, in crime reporting involving the abuse or neglect of children, journalists often attribute more horror where a woman is involved. A famous case in point is Myra Hindley, who was vilified by the press and public far more than her partner, Ian Brady, for the crimes they committed against children, despite the fact that Brady was the dominant force behind the crimes they committed together.

## Anonymisation

Participants in texts can often be anonymised.

A source said today that the government would be focusing on environmental issues.

Some people believe that globalisation is a bad thing.

In the first case, it is common to see anonymised participants (‘a source’) in newspapers. On the one hand, we rely on journalists to have legitimate sources, but this conceals the way that certain social groups and organisations may not have equal access to journalists. In the second example, we can see how politicians, in this case former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, can use such representations (‘some people’) to avoid specification and developing a detailed and coherent argument. They allow us to conveniently summon arguments that are then easy to dismiss.

## Aggregation

Aggregation means that participants are quantified and treated as ‘statistics’:

Many thousands of immigrants are arriving in...

Scores of Muslim inmates at a high security prison are set to launch a multi-million pound claim for compensation after they were offered

ham sandwiches during the holy month of Ramadan. (*The Daily Mail*, 26 October 2007)

Van Dijk (1991) shows that this kind of statistics can be utilised to give the impression of objective research and scientific credibility, when in fact we are not given specific figures. Is 'many thousands' 3,000 or 100,000, for example? And what are 'scores'? In the news agency feed received by the IRN discussed in Chapter 2, we find the following line:

One of the few suspects to express remorse over his alleged involvement in last year's bombings on Indonesia's Bali island arrived at court on Thursday.

In this case, how many is 'the few'? Exactly how many have shown remorse and how many have not? What is the reason for not being informed? What becomes apparent from this particular text is the depoliticisation of the suspects' acts. We are not informed about the political aims of those who planted the bombs. They become generic terrorists and part of the news frame of the 'war on terror'. What kind of remorse they expressed is not clear either. Does this mean they now no longer believe in their political aims? So in cases of aggregation, where actual numbers are replaced by such abstractions, we can always ask what ideological work is being done.

## Pronoun versus noun: the 'us' and 'them' division

Pronouns like 'us', 'we' and 'them' are used to align us alongside or against particular ideas. Text producers can evoke their own ideas as being our ideas and create a collective 'other' that is in opposition to these shared ideas (Oktar, 2001; Eriksson and Aronsson, 2005).

We live in a democracy of which we are proud.

They shall not be allowed to threaten our democracies and freedom.

We have to decide to be strong and fight this global terrorism to the end.

Fairclough (2000: 152) has pointed out that the concept of 'we' is slippery. This fact can be used by text producers and politicians to make vague statements and conceal power relations. 'We' can mean 'the political party', whereas in the next sentence it can mean 'the people of Britain', and further down an unspecified group of nations. In the first example above, does 'we' mean the people or a collection of superpowers?

We can see this vague use of 'we' in the *Daily Mail* anti-immigration story above. In this case, it is used to evoke a shared British culture although the exact composition of this 'we' is not overtly explained in the text. This can be illustrated as follows:

Britain has an indigenous culture.

We must fight the deluge of immigrants.

These two sentences imply what is said in the following without actually saying it:

We of the indigenous British culture must fight the deluge of immigrants.

Put in this way, the racist discourse becomes much more overt, whereas splitting the information into two sentences helps the writer to conceal this.

## Suppression

What is missing from a text is just as important as what is in a text (Fairclough, 2003). Consider the following examples:

Globalisation is now affecting all national economies.

Market-based economies are establishing themselves in all areas of life.

In both these sentences the agent is missing. Globalisation is not something that has the power to change things, but is a theory which attempts to describe a perceived process or phenomenon that is caused by particular agents. It is driven by large corporations and world economic organisations such as the World Trade Organisation and World Bank. In the second sentence, market-based economies are not agents themselves but are a result of a particular political ideology. They have become established through specific political decisions and waves of privatisation that have followed. The result of these two sentences is that both globalisation and market-based economies appear natural and inevitable, something that must be responded to and adapted to rather than something that should be questioned.

## Case study 1: Aggregation and suppression

The first case study is a text from *The Daily Mail* (26 October 2007).

**Muslim prisoners sue for millions after they were offered ham sandwiches for Ramadan**

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Scores of Muslim inmates at a high security prison are set to launch a multi-million pound claim for compensation after they were offered ham sandwiches during the holy month of Ramadan.

They say their human rights were breached when they were given a special nightly menu – drawn up to recognise their specific dietary requirements – by officers at HMP Leeds last month.

More than 200 Muslim inmates at the jail are believed to have been offered the meat which is strictly forbidden by Islam.

The sandwich was one of three options on the menu card which was created to cover the religious festival during which Muslims are required to fast during daylight.

They later complained to prison officers on duty but say they were told that the menus had been printed in error.

Yet when they opened the sandwiches, having ordered cheese, some claim they were still filled with boiled ham.

They are now launching legal action, insisting that their human rights were breached and could each be entitled to up to £10,000 in compensation if they win their case at court.

One Muslim inmate, a 28-year-old who was serving a 16-week sentence for driving whilst disqualified, said: 'When I opened my meal that night I found I'd been given a ham sandwich. I'd asked for cheese.

'It was a breach of my human rights and I want compensation.'

He claimed that some inmates were so hungry they ended up eating the sandwiches.

The prison denied that any Muslim prisoners had been given ham sandwiches but admitted there had been a mistake when the menus were printed.

A spokesman for the Ministry of Justice said: 'An inappropriate menu card was printed during Ramadan. This mistake was rectified immediately.

'Appropriate menu options for the Iftaar evening meal were available throughout Ramadan.

'Prison Service guidelines state that prisoners must have a diet which meets the requirements of their religion.'

It comes as 16 Muslim inmates at Leeds Prison prepare to launch a separate legal case over claims of mistreatment, including being given food that is forbidden by their religion.

They are expected to claim at a hearing next year that they were given meat which was not halal.

Kate Maynard, from law firm Hickman and Rose Solicitors who is representing some of the men, said: 'One of the issues they are worried about is that they were being told food was halal when it wasn't.

'They are taking this to court to try to change conditions in the prison and make conditions better.'

Last year the Prison Service was forced to apologise to Muslim inmates at a category B jail after a kitchen worker was caught throwing ham into halal curries.

Prisoners at HMP Blakenhurst in Worcestershire each received a written apology.

The inmate behind the attack at the prison, which houses 1,070 offenders, was observed throwing tinned ham into curries destined for Muslim inmates and suspended from his job in the kitchen.

This text fuses two well-trodden news frames that are typical of this newspaper. One of these discourses is that prison inmates are treated far too well and that life inside a prison is like a holiday camp. Those who have visited prisons, as both authors have, will know about the depressing and soul-draining effect they can have on inmates. The other discourse is one which holds that foreigners who come to Britain are unwilling to adapt to its culture and values. In this discourse, the British themselves are represented as the victims. These discourses can both be seen in the following lines from the text:

One Muslim inmate, a 28-year-old who was serving a 16-week sentence for driving whilst disqualified, said: 'When I opened my meal that night I found I'd been given a ham sandwich. I'd asked for cheese.

'It was a breach of my human rights and I want compensation.'

Here we can see the implied outrage that such a person should dare to demand that British society should bend to their whims. But what we are interested in specifically in this chapter is the way that representational strategies, the way that some aspects of identity are foregrounded and others backgrounded, form an important part of the way the social world is mapped out for us. Other features of this text, which we will come back to in later chapters, are also very important.

In this text there are four categories of participants: those who are complaining about the prison food, other prison inmates, those who are part of the prison service and a lawyer. The first category is represented always through the word 'Muslim'. This term is overlexicalised in this text, being used nine times. Every time a prisoner is mentioned, whether collectivised as 'Muslim prisoners' or 'Muslim inmates', or as

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individuals, as in 'One Muslim inmate', the generic category 'Muslim' is used. In some of these cases, other representational choices could have been used, such as simply 'prisoner', 'inmate' or 'men'. To be fair, the Muslim prisoners are referred to as 'men' once: 'Kate Maynard, from law firm Hickman and Rose Solicitors who is representing some of the men, said...' On one occasion the nominal group is expanded to individualise a prisoner: in the case of 'a 28-year-old who was serving a 16-week sentence for driving whilst disqualified'. However, these details about his sentence might be said to further deligitimise his call to 'human rights'. Wherever there is such overlexicalisation we can assume that for some reason there is some kind of over-persuasion taking place which is normally evidence that something is problematic or of ideological contention.

Other prisoners are represented as 'an inmate', 'kitchen worker', 'the men'. Unlike the Muslim men, these prisoners are not represented in terms of their religion or through longer nominal groups describing their age and the offence for which they were imprisoned. They remain remote and impersonal. In another story about prisons a different set of representational strategies might have been used to position these men as 'others' in our society, such as 'offenders', 'monsters' or 'thugs'. In this case, it is clear that these participants are backgrounded and anonymised.

The people who work for the prison service are represented as 'officers', 'the prison', 'a spokesman for the Ministry of Justice'. Notable here is the use of functionalisation and honorifics. The prison system here is represented as anonymous and official. There is no personalisation of the prison itself by naming its officers.

We could imagine how the story could have been written differently, for example by personalising the Muslim prisoners much more. There is clearly nothing in this story to indicate that it might be the oppressive and unjust nature of the prison itself that might foster or instigate this situation. In fact, sociological and criminological research has revealed that prisons tend to be populated by the most vulnerable members of our society, the poor and ethnic groups who already find themselves at the hard end of the distribution of resources and opportunities (e.g. Scraton, 1997). Yet in this story the choice of representational strategies, along with other features we will mention later, serves to position the Muslim prisoners as 'other' in our society, while this is not the case for the other prisoners, who are simply 'inmates' and 'men' rather than 'offenders', 'lags' or 'hardened criminals', as they are often referred to in popular newspapers articles about prisons. The story could have been written as evidence of the way that all kinds of people in prison are treated poorly and their religious and cultural beliefs disrespected, or of financial cuts to the prison service which leave little room for such sensitivities. This could have been connected to the implications for retraining and rehabilitating the men in prison, the lack of which have been proven to result in much higher chances of reoffending.

What is most notable in this text, however, in terms of representational strategies, is the use of aggregation in 'more than 200 Muslim inmates', 'scores of Muslim inmates'. These vague aggregations are then followed by the sentences:

They later complained to prison officers on duty but say they were told that the menus had been printed in error.

Yet when they opened the sandwiches, having ordered cheese, some claim they were still filled with boiled ham.

They are now launching legal action, insisting that their human rights were breached and could each be entitled to up to £10,000 in compensation if they win their case at court.

Here we find the representational term of 'they' used where we have not yet been given a specific number. Are the 'scores' of Muslim inmates complaining and launching legal action, or a proportion of these? The text uses this ambiguity to create a sense of outrage and indicates a wider Muslim problem. Only towards the end of the article are we told that 'It comes as 16 Muslim inmates at Leeds Prison prepare to launch a separate legal case over claims of mistreatment, including being given food that is forbidden by their religion'. And even here the complaint appears to include those who have issues with other kinds of mistreatment.

In the text it is only the lawyer representing the inmates who is nominated. Her name sounds un-Muslim and her comments are presented in a way to make them appear much more measured than some of those she represents. Also, here it is the non-Muslim participant who therefore appears as reasonable and legitimate and as having agency.

The quoting verbs, which were dealt with in full in the previous chapter, are also important in this text. These are the verbs used to represent how someone expresses something. Here we can list some of those attributed to the prisoners.

Muslim prisoners complained to prison officers

Some claim they were still filled with boiled ham

Insisting that their human rights were breached

Where the prison officers speak we find:

Prison officers [...] told that the menus had been printed in error

The quoting verbs chosen for the Muslim prisoners here are metapositional expressives. In other words, they are often not simply 'saying' or 'reporting' that they had inappropriate food, but are rather forceful. Also the use of 'claim' lessens the

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certainty of their argument. We can see the difference if we substitute the quoting verbs as in the following sentences.

Muslim prisoners reported to prison officers

Some explained they were still filled with boiled ham

suggesting that their human rights were breached

In the examples above the prisoners sound much more moderate and this reads as if it is a simple narrative of the events as opposed to the 'rantings' of prisoners who are, after all, offenders and therefore may find their claim to human rights somehow reduced.

We will be looking at more details in this text in subsequent chapters. Also important, for example, are the words that describe what people do as well as what they are. These too help to evaluate events implicitly.

## Case study 2: Different discourse genres of participants

The following analysis of representational strategies is from the careers advice section of the women's lifestyle magazine *Marie Claire* (2010) that was analysed for simple lexical choices in Chapter 2. In this case we can think specifically about the work done through some of the participants being drawn from fictional domains. The text deals with the subject of how to maintain career opportunities in times of economic downturn when your company is making your colleagues redundant.

Ideologically, this text is very powerful, as it recommends not that employees should support each other or operate through trade unions in times of redundancies, but that the individual should work strategically to take advantage of the situation for their own gain. What we show here is that the fictional references help to soften this effect.

In this text, the social actors are: 'boss', 'manager', 'management', 'supervisor', 'Calandra', 'office hotshot', 'I', 'you', 'her', 'we', 'Pollyanna', 'cheerleader', 'co-workers', 'colleague', 'Tracy Flick', 'cubemate'. We can arrange these into four categories. The first are more formal work terms, the second more trendy language, the third fictional characters and, lastly, personal pronouns. Placing categories of social actors in a table can help to visualise them.

On the one hand, we have a set of participants that we might expect when dealing with the work environment as in 'boss', 'management', 'supervisor' and 'colleague', although markedly absent here is any reference to trade unions. In this text the

**Table 4** Representational strategies in *Marie Claire* text

Boss	Office hotshot	Calandra	I
Manager	Cheerleader	Pollyanna	You
Management	Cubemate	Tracy Flick	Her
Supervisor			We
Co-workers			
Colleague			

woman who is addressed acts alone and strategically. She is not concerned about the possibility of further redundancies or how she and her colleagues might work together to prevent further job losses.

These work-type representational strategies place the events into a formal work environment, although we should note that there are no more specific functionalisations. We are not told what particular job is performed by these people, only that they are generic 'supervisors' etc. In Chapter 2 we considered the way that these lifestyle magazine articles do not document real workplaces and people, but symbolise them. The images we looked at showed glamorous women standing among a few props that connoted work. This was important to place the advice given not in real circumstances but almost as playful fantasies which nonetheless play an important role in signifying discourses where women are in control and have agency. This lack of specificity in details of work type and roles serves the same function. Van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) suggest that wherever actual details are replaced by abstractions we can assume that some kind of ideological work is taking place. What is important to stress here is that just because these texts appear to be trivial and playful we must not underestimate their ideological power.

Other representational choices in this text help to lighten the topic. If representational strategies had relied only on formal work terms this may have made the text too dark. But this is changed, on the one hand, through the use of trendy language as in 'office hotshot', 'cubemate' and 'cheerleader'. We noted in our lexical analysis of this text in Chapter 2 that this trendy language, this use of the latest expressions, plays an important part in indicating that this is an up-to-date way of seeing the world. This is a crucial part of lifestyle discourse which is harnessed to the 'latest-thing' discourse of consumerism. So while this text, on the one hand, refers to actual functional categories, we also find further abstractions in the form of trendy language.

Central to the choices of representational strategies in this text are the fictionalised actors. 'Tracy Flick' is a fictional character portrayed by actress Reese Witherspoon in a comedy movie called *Election*. In this movie, Flick is largely unpopular as she is ambitious and self-focused but likeable, and is played by a very attractive Hollywood actress. Pollyanna is a girl from children's fiction who is 'naughty' and assertive but

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in an endearing way. By drawing on these fictional characters the analysis offered by *Marie Claire* does not refer to real concrete issues of industrial dispute but is able to draw on connotations of assertiveness, likeability and individuality.

We can imagine the effect of this kind of representational strategy if it were used in an actual case of an industrial dispute. It would appear as bizarre if a news story of a strike at a manufacturing plant referred to workers as 'Pollyannas'. Yet in the world created by lifestyle magazines real-world terms and fiction blend seamlessly. The fictional references lighten the tone of the piece away from the ideological basis that we should all act only as individuals. In a time when the jobs of your colleagues are threatened, you consider this only in the light of how it might influence the way you negotiate your own career improvement. But what does it mean when, in the representation of industrial change, fiction and reality are ambiguously juxtaposed?

Finally, what is important in terms of representational choices in this text is the use of 'I' and 'you'. The use of personal pronouns is common in advertising and also in conversational language (Machin and van Leeuwen, 2007). This text claims to be neither but is drawing on both kinds of language. In advertising, these pronouns help to personalise products and producers and their relationship with the consumer. For example, an advertisement for mortgages might read: 'We agree with your wife. You can afford a new house.' The conversational style of speaking to 'you' also prevents this from reading as authoritative knowledge, but rather as the language of an expert who speaks closer to the level of the addressee. This language therefore aims to be trusted not on the basis of proscribed status, as is the case in the professions, but in terms of its claim to personal experience, which is communicated partly through being on your level through the use of personal pronouns and partly through the up-to-date language.

What is also interesting about the representational strategies found in these lifestyle texts is that while they generally contain personal address through the personal pronoun 'you', at the same time personal characteristics are suppressed. The text creates a world of generic types, the 'Tracy Flick', the 'Pollyanna', the 'office gossip', the generic 'boss'. Yet in reality how we experience our work lives depends on who we are, our dispositions, our appearance, our qualifications and also those of our boss. In these texts, as we often find in advertising, the world is reduced to a simple problem-solution formula. None of this envisages personal issues. In the problems and solutions offered, all persons can use them and they are universally applicable. Everything is displaced to a set of strategies.

### Case study 3: Suppression of social actors

From a representational point of view, Fairclough (2003: 136) suggests that we can look at what elements of events are included in a text and what elements are

excluded. Here we turn our attention to a text analysed by Kress (1985), where this process is particularly important. A revisit of this text at this moment is timely, given the way that established discourses on such topics have now changed.

### **Tropical savanna pastoral region**

The environmental conditions of this region mean that it is poorly suited to most forms of agriculture. It receives most of its rainfall during the summer monsoons, and then experiences a winter drought. Furthermore, the natural savanna woodlands vegetation and grasslands have few nutrients for intensive grazing, the soils are poor, the region is a long distance from markets, and transport facilities are poorly developed. Thus, the land is used for little else except extensive beef cattle grazing on farms which sometimes exceed 15,000 square kilometres in size. The large size of the farms is needed because of the land's poor carrying capacity, which may mean one beast needs 20 to 30 hectares to survive. Attempts were made to establish irrigation agriculture around the Ord River in the 1960s, but saline soils, high costs of long distance transport to markets, and the costs of dam and irrigation canal construction led to the virtual failure of the scheme in the early 1970s. It was intended to produce cotton, sugar cane and rice in the Ord River Scheme. Another land use, mining, is now of greater value than beef grazing. Important minerals include uranium (Rum Jungle, Ranger, Nabarlek), bauxite (Weipa, Michell Plateau), iron ore (Yampi Sound, Frances Creek), manganese (Groote Eylandt), copper, lead, silver, zinc (all at Mount Isa) and gold (Tennant Creek). The largest towns in the region are Darwin and Mount Isa, each with just over 35,000 people.

(S.B. & D.M. Codrington (1982) *World of Contrasts: Case Studies in World Development for Secondary Geography*. Sydney: William Brooks, p. 193)

This text, intended for school children, contains some unspoken assumptions. The exploitation of land for resources and profit is taken for granted. Landscapes are to be assessed in terms of how much they can be used for a specific range of activities and not on their own terms; hence there are expressions such as 'poorly suited', 'soils are poor', 'long distance from market', 'land's poor carrying capacity'. This landscape could have been assessed by its own merit. Consider a statement such as 'the Amazon rainforest is poor for cattle grazing'. This is to see it only in terms of how it can be exploited for profit and not for its natural beauty. Capitalist motives, the importance of profit are not, however, expressed overtly.

This excerpt from a textbook for children published in the early 1980s clearly indicates a time before concerns about the environment and global warming became more widespread and more acceptable in Geography curricula.

We can investigate the language processes through which this takes place further by looking specifically at the participants. In fact, what is notable about this text is the suppression of social actors. All we find mentioned are '35,000 people'. Repeatedly, we find sentences that lack agents. For example:

*(Continued)*

*(Continued)*

Attempts were made to establish irrigation agriculture around the Ord River in the 1960s.

The land is used for little except extensive beef cattle grazing.

The large size of the farms is needed because of the land's poor carrying capacity.

It was intended to produce cotton, sugar cane and rice in the Ord River Scheme.

In the first sentence, who made the attempts to establish irrigation? In the second sentence, who is the land used by? In the third, who needs the farms to be large? In the fourth, who was intending to produce cotton? Why are the children not told who is behind these actions?

Where there is such a deletion of agents we must ask why this is the case. It appears that while it is regarded as important that children learn about the principles of capitalism, there may have been, during the 1980s, an emerging embarrassment about the exploitation of this area and the world in this fashion.

We can ask the same kind of questions about the East Midlands Development Agency mission statement also analysed for lexical choices in Chapter 2.

#### **EMDA 'mission statement'**

The vision is for the East Midlands to become a fast growing, dynamic economy based on innovative, knowledge based companies competing successfully in the global economy.

East Midlands Innovation launched its Regional Innovation Strategy and action plan in November 2006. This sets out how we will use the knowledge, skills and creativity of organisations and individuals to build an innovation led economy.

Our primary role to deliver our mission is to be the strategic driver of economic development in the East Midlands, working with partners to deliver the goals of the Regional Economic Strategy, which EMDA produces on behalf of the region.

I am committed to ensuring that these strategic priorities act as guiding principles for EMDA as we work with our partners in the region and beyond to achieve the region's ambition to be a Top 20 Region by 2010 and a flourishing region by 2020.

The participants in this text are: 'East Midlands Innovation', 'innovative, knowledge based companies', 'we', 'organisations', 'individuals', 'I', 'partners', 'the strategic driver of economic development'.

Fairclough (2003: 137) suggests that social events can be represented at different levels of abstraction or generalisation. At a low level of abstraction we would be able to see clearly what processes are being carried out with what kind of causality,

by which social actors and in which times and places, if relevant. A high level of abstraction would be where these become obscured. In the Tropic Savanna text above, to a critical reader the processes of exploitation are fairly clear, although they are not described as such and although the participants involved in these are excluded. In the EMDA text, however, it is difficult to identify what exactly is to be done and how. There is also a high level of abstraction at the level of representational strategies.

To begin with, at the level of abstraction there is 'East Midlands Innovation', with connotations of 'ideas' and 'possibilities' through the use of the word 'Innovation'. But what this agent actually is and what they do is unclear. Is this a company, or simply a group of people? Later in the text we are told that the aim is to become 'the strategic driver of economic development'. But what does this mean exactly? Is this to happen through investment, through addressing government policy, through simply seeking to generate personal profits? Here we find that the text, rather than stating 'we will strategically drive economic development', turns the process 'to drive' into its identity. This strategy works to sidestep the act of making promises of actual change.

A further abstraction is the participant 'innovative, knowledge based companies'. Clearly all companies must have some kind of knowledge base, so in some way this is an odd kind of representational strategy. Also, the word 'innovation' is used, so we can assume that they will not be basing the economy on companies that wish to maintain established practices. We then find other generalisations, such as 'organisations' and 'individuals'. We are not told who these are specifically. They could therefore refer to anyone.

The use of the term 'partners' has the same effect. The discourse of 'partnership' was an important part of the rhetoric of the New Labour government's consensual style of politics, developed in Britain from the late 1990s (Newman, 2001). The term generally meant public and private agencies working together, although it also had the added meaning of the public being included in these partnerships, with all working together as 'stakeholders'. What is glossed over is the way that the interests between those parties may easily clash (Levitas, 2005).

In fact, the term 'stakeholders' glossed over the leading role often taken by private companies. Commentators (Newman, 2001; Levitas, 2005) have written on the effects of this attempt to deal with social issues – what became little more than an exercise in ticking the right policy and directive boxes and meeting the right targets. Hundreds of quasi-organisations become enmeshed with each other, adding layers of complexity with little practical outcome.

Texts like the one above are generally designed to avoid any kind of specificity. Occasionally the use of buzzwords can be seen to clash with reality, for example when abstraction meets with actual everyday issues. As part of the Plan to generate

*(Continued)*

*(Continued)*

growth, productivity and competitiveness, EMDA described the ideal workforce. Here the representational strategies are consistent with those found above:

#### **EMDA 2010 Employment, learning and skills**

A dynamic, flexible and skilled workforce helps businesses to thrive and individuals to maintain their employability. The East Midlands is characterised by a combination of high employment and a predominance of jobs demanding low skills and paying low wages.

What stands out in this short description is the fact that after stating the need for a 'dynamic, flexible and skilled workforce', the next sentence tells us that in the East Midlands there is 'a predominance of jobs demanding low skills and paying low wages'. Yet, clearly, if the EMDA had the aim of creating a workforce appropriate to the need for low skills and short-term contract work, this would not appear in line with the discourse of 'vision' and innovation. And what exactly does it mean to employees to be 'dynamic' and 'flexible'? These neo-capitalist buzzwords conceal unequal power relations. As Cameron (2001) has argued, the capitalist's flexibility is the worker's insecurity. Terrifyingly, these documents and policies do pass for legitimate and official stances on concrete issues in our society.

## **Representational strategies in visual communication**

In the previous section on representational strategies in language we focused on one specific class of lexical choices, those used to represent people. We now carry out the same step of specialisation for visual communication. In Chapter 2 we looked at the way that the visual representation of objects and settings could be used to communicate more general ideas and discourses. We explored how images may seek to depict specific people and how these people can be used to connote general concepts, types of people, 'stereotypes', and abstract ideas.

When carrying out an analysis of the way that meanings are communicated through a combination of linguistic and visual representational strategies, it is important to identify how the different affordances of the two modes have been used to create different meanings. We can draw out the different affordances by asking how each carries meanings that could not be communicated through the other.

We begin by looking at some simple ways that image designers can represent participants in more or less personalised ways.

## Positioning the viewer in relation to people inside the image

### Distance

In pictures as in real life, distance signifies social relations. We 'keep our distance' from people we do not want to 'be in touch with' and 'get close to people' we see as part of our circle of friends or intimates. In images, distance translates as 'size of frame' (close, medium, or long shot). In Chapter 3 we looked at photographs of two politicians, Nick Clegg and David Cameron. Both of these are closer shots. Therefore the photographer, or page editor, as these may have been cropped to create this effect, has decided to take us close to these politicians to their inner states and feelings. In the case of Clegg, the photograph is perhaps meant to take us close to the 'real' Clegg, which is reflected in the discourse in the accompanying text, where he comes across as approachable and genuine. In the case of Cameron's photograph, the closer shot gives the impression of giving access to his worries, which again is supported by the language in the text.

Drawing on the analysis of gaze from the previous chapter, it is important to point out that Clegg looks right at the viewer, engaging with us. Combined with the close shot, these are important semiotic choices that help to show him as open and sincere. Cameron, however, looks away or 'off-frame', which tends to encourage us to observe participants more 'objectively' and consider what their thoughts are. We could imagine the difference in meaning had the two men been photographed in medium or long shot. The same image of Clegg, but in long shot, would not have connoted intimacy, but loneliness and isolation. At that point it was important for the news media to bring us close to the 'real' politicians as part of their attempt to dramatise the lead-up to the general election.

In the *Sun* article in Chapter 2, 'Our Boys Blitz Taliban Bash' on page 40 the accompanying photo depicts a soldier in medium shot. Here we are not meant to consider his thoughts on any personal or intimate level, but we are drawn to identify with his point of view more so than with that of the civilian, who is positioned in long shot. In many such news photographs, it is the civilians who appear in long shot unless the story is specifically about their suffering in wars or famines. The latter representations of civilians are normally the subject of special reports in Sunday newspaper supplements rather than in routine news reporting (see, for example, Machin, 2007b).

Coming back to the photographs from the women's lifestyle magazines we looked at in Chapter 2, women tend to be photographed in close or medium shot. Again, close-ups are used when we are meant to imagine the woman as the agent of the feelings expressed in the text, such as in relationship features like 'Can you trust your boyfriend?', where a young woman may be found gazing off-frame looking thoughtfully. Medium shots are used where it is important that we see what the woman is wearing and to connote her acting in modernist settings, as in the image on page 45.

As for the Health Trust webpage of Trust workers that we analysed on page 54, we can see a montage of close shots. The doctor even overlaps the edge of the frame, bringing him further forward to suggest an increased degree of social intimacy. On the North Essex Trust homepage below, we can see two faces represented in close shot, symbolising patients of the Trust. Again, this serves to take us closer to their experiences and feelings. Important in foregrounding the experiences of these two 'patients' are other iconographical elements, as discussed in Chapter 2. The setting here is blurred with some green shading that connotes nature, although this was most likely a studio shot. Teeth here are particularly white and straight, and therefore connote health, attractiveness and 'vibrancy'. There is high key lighting with a bright background and highlights are visible on their faces, suggesting optimism as opposed to darker shadings that are often used to connote darker moods. Importantly, the effect of close proximity serves to bring the viewer into more intimate relations with the participants and therefore serves to personalise them. If we imagine the same image of these people positioned in the middle distance, this would have made them appear more as generic 'patients' rather than as individuals. It is clearly in the interest of the Trust to represent its users as highly personalised and special. Such techniques, as we have discussed previously, are one way by which matters of lack of quality of service actually offered is glossed over.

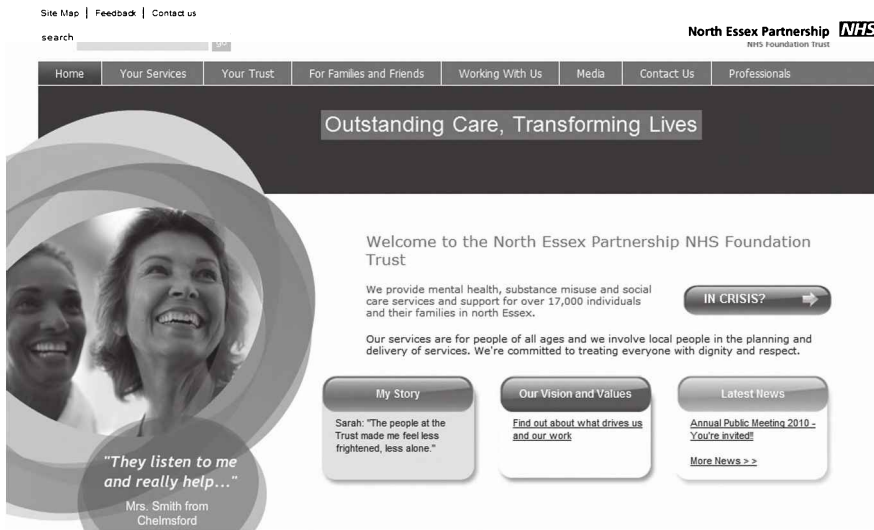
Linguistically, too, the North Essex homepage backgrounds matters of illness and treatment, and foregrounds actions like 'transforming lives'. They state that:

Our services are for people of all ages and we involve local people in the planning and delivery of services. We are committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect.

In terms of representational strategies, we find not specific people who need specific treatment, but a sense of inclusion of 'people of all ages'. Would we expect the service to *exclude* people of certain ages? The 'local people' involved in planning and delivering services are generic people, which could of course conceal the fact that they are local business people. But the term 'local' connotes something familiar and safe. Participants are again individualised through nominating them: 'Sarah', 'Mrs Smith from Chelmsford'.

## Angle

In pictures, as in real life, there are different ways we can engage with people. Becoming involved with people means, literally, 'confronting' them, coming 'face to face' with them. In certain interactions, of course, we may not come 'face to face' but merely observe others, for example, when two people are arguing. Here we will watch the action from side on. The side-on view is more detached, although combined with closeness, it can, depending on the



**Figure 10** North Essex Partnership homepage

circumstances, index togetherness. So if we see a photograph of a person side-on but very close-up, this can connote a close alignment and a sharedness of position. This is sometimes communicated in side-on close-ups of British and American soldiers with their military equipment. We are encouraged to align with their thoughts and concerns. If we see them further away, there is a greater sense that we are a more remote observer of the scene.

On the North Essex Trust webpage above, we confront the two people, yet they look slightly to the side. Combined with the closeness, this appears intimate to a degree, yet they are represented as slightly to the side, so we are not directly involved – we are observing them.

In images we also see people from behind. In the image of the *Cosmopolitan* woman analysed in the Introduction, she is seen slightly from behind. Where we see people from behind, this can often serve to offer us their point of view, their perspective on the world. So if in an image we were to see the back of a person and then beyond them another person pointing a gun at them, we would take the perspective of the first person who faces the threat.

In the *Cosmopolitan* image we have something in between looking at a person as a voyeur and her engaging us. Since she is represented in medium shot this is not an intimate viewpoint. But since she looks back at us we are also acknowledged and therefore included in the image. In the work of Machin and van Leeuwen (2007) on the way such magazines work, it is noted that it is crucial that the reader is always addressed as part of a community of modern, attractive women. On the one hand this works linguistically through personal address 'you' and 'we', but also visually, through the address of gaze.

In photographs we may also engage with the participants from the vertical angle. You can either 'look down on' or 'look up to' people to various degrees. As in real life, this can have a number of effects. Often looking down on someone can give a sense of their vulnerability, looking up at them can give a sense of their power. For example, in the leaflets produced by children's charities, the children are often positioned in a way that we look down at them to show how vulnerable they are, whereas in lifestyle magazines, celebrities can be photographed so that we look up to them.

In the image of the North Essex Health Trust website above, we look up at the participants. We could say that this has the meaning potential to suggest that they are empowered. We also look up slightly to the soldier in Helmand province (see page 40 in Chapter 2), perhaps to connote that he has agency. Were we to look down at him, he might appear vulnerable in this terrain. Linguistically, in the text that accompanied this image, we found that the soldiers were represented as being professional and highly strategic, as opposed to the chaotic and unprofessional enemy. The image helps to reinforce what is expressed in the language.

We also look up at the woman from the *Marie Claire* article on page 46 in the same chapter, perhaps to suggest that she is somebody to emulate. However, in the image of Nick Clegg on page 76 we are positioned at the same height. This is one way to connote that he is 'an ordinary person'. On page 72 we also look slightly up at David Cameron. In this case, rather than giving him the appearance of agency, it combines with his downcast, thoughtful gaze to amplify a sense that we are being brought close to his more intimate thoughts. In the text that accompanied this image Cameron was presented as a man concerned about his performance in a televised leadership debate. The image communicates that we are being taken close up and intimate to a man who is worried.

## Individualisation versus collectivisation

In the first section of this chapter we looked at some of the linguistic resources available for representing participants as individuals, groups or anonymous figures. We argued that all these could serve ideological ends in that they evaluate the participants positively or negatively and align the reader to events and actions in ways that are not necessarily stated overtly. There are also visual semiotic resources available for achieving these effects in images.

### Individuals and groups

We already know that people can be depicted as individuals or as a group. If they are depicted as a group, they can be 'homogenised', that is they are made to look like and/or act or pose like each other to different degrees, creating

a 'they are all the same' or 'you can't tell them apart' impression. Often we find images like these of immigrants or ethnic groups that accompany news stories about the negative consequences of 'mass immigration'. Such images serve to collectivise and generically represent people who may have many complex and different reasons for being there, and at least reasons that are highly compelling and personal. Yet they are represented as a homogenised whole.

In the images taken from *Cosmopolitan* (page 45) magazine and *Marie Claire* (page 7) we usually find women represented as individuals. This is common in these women's lifestyle magazines. It is very rare to find more than one woman represented. In the *Marie Claire* example, where the text tells us of tips on how to get ahead even when there are redundancies in your office, the image of the individual woman is one way to indicate that the agent in this situation acts alone; it is one way that the reader is invited to align with the events through this individual. Machin and van Leeuwen (2007) have shown how in such magazines the woman is depicted as always acting alone and strategically. In these magazines, there is no collective and no society. Machin and van Leeuwen conclude that this representational strategy is most suited to the requirements of the magazine to fit with the ideology of individualism that lies at the root of Western consumerism and corporate capitalism.

In the image of Helmand province we find only one soldier depicted. While he is not named, he is still individualised visually through being represented alone. Of course, it is unlikely that he would be out patrolling alone, and in the text, linguistically, a larger number of British soldiers are represented and for the most part they are collectivised. This visual depiction of the lone soldier calmly patrolling perhaps serves to make the British army's presence in the province seem less oppressive than it may seem to the civilians out there.

## Generic and specific depictions

In images people can be depicted as individuals or specific people. They can be depicted as people who just happen to be black, Jewish or Muslim, or whatever, or they can be depicted as typical black people or Jews or Muslims. The latter is achieved through stereotypical representations of dress, hairstyle and grooming, and/or selected (and often exaggerated) physical features (particularly in cartoons). The effect is to make the individuality of people disappear behind the elements that categorise them. Cartoons in particular can stylise and exaggerate individual as well as stereotyped group characteristics (e.g. exaggerated facial features of certain ethnic groups). Clearly this is a matter of degree – a cline that runs from the most blatant stereotypes to a kind of selectivity that does not allow the actual variety of a group to be depicted. In a sense we cannot do without categories, and hence it could be argued we need stereotypes (Hall, 1997). However, if they carry negative connotations, stereotypes can become derogatory and/or racist.

In the image of the soldier in Helmand province, the civilian in the background is included as a generic type. Commentaries on these kinds of representations of indigenous people from around the world in the media have shown how these often fulfil a number of expectations or stereotypes (Lutz and Collins, 1993). In images in some sectors of the British press at the time of writing, it was common to see newspaper items referring to Muslim people in Britain showing one woman or groups of women dressed in full burqa. The text itself does not claim that 'all Muslim women look like this', but such generic visual representations may serve to suggest or connote that they are.

## Exclusion: Ways of (not) representing others

Certain categories of people are not represented in pictures of settings where they are in fact present, or in events in which they participate. In many of the images so far analysed we find important exclusions. Just as it is revealing to ask who is backgrounded or excluded linguistically from a text, so it is important to ask the same visually. In the image of the soldier in Helmand province, the rest of the soldiers and the victims of the attack described in the text are excluded. Of course, it is not so easy to visually represent a military attack through semiotic choices that communicate only strategy, professionalism and neutrality. Images of an actual military attack using artillery would have shown destruction with maimed and dead people. That this is not shown is ideologically significant. In photographs of the Vietnam war in the 1970s, images did show the horrors of war. War was represented for what it is: squalor, suffering, pain, cruelty and abuse. In the Helmand province article and in many other representation of the war in both Afghanistan and Iraq, the public is not to see war represented in this fashion. This change suggests the ideological requirement that authorities at this time do not wish the British public to contemplate the effects of the military presence in this way.

In the *Marie Claire* career text, while linguistically colleagues and bosses are represented, we do not see these visually. The people whom the woman works for or against for her own gains are not depicted. This is important. What if the text was accompanied by a photograph of a real office showing a woman surrounded by her colleagues? This would of course anchor the text in a real-life setting rather than the playful fantasy world couched in trendy language and with fictional characters. What is clear is that the ideology of individualism and rampant careerism communicated in this text is expressed through both linguistic and visual semiotic resources. The image here serves not to depict a particular woman at work, but to symbolise a generic attractive and fashionable woman shown in an intimate close-up, and in an abstracted setting. Linguistically she is trendy and confident, but also operates close to a fictional realm. Machin and Thornborrow (2003) suggest that these texts should be seen much like children's fairytales. They may take place in the realm of fantasy but nevertheless they carry very real messages about evaluations of identities, ideas, values and actions with possible social consequences.

## Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the naming and visual representation of persons. The communicator always has a range of semiotic choices available to them when they wish to represent a person. The choices they make will never be neutral but will be based on the way they wish to signpost what kind of person they are representing, or how they wish to represent them as social actors engaged in action. These choices allow us to place people in the social world and to highlight certain aspects of identity we wish to draw attention to or omit. Like lexical and iconographical choices in general, they can have the effect of connoting sets of ideas, values and sequences of activity that are not necessarily overtly articulated. And such choices, whether linguistic or visual, can serve to position those represented in relation to the viewer/reader. Such choices may serve to implicitly legitimise or delegitimise the actions of participants implicitly, since representational choices can connote broader associations of ideas, values and motives. In society at any one time different kinds of classifications tend to dominate and those who have power will seek to promote those classifications that best serve their interests, whether these are related to national or ethnic identity, or consumer lifestyle categories. In analysis, as we have shown in this chapter, we must carefully describe the different representational strategies for different participants and connect this to broader discourses. We must also carefully consider the relationship between linguistic and visual representation of social actors.