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A. Suresh Canagarajah, *Critical academic writing and multilingual students*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2002, ISBN 0-472-08853-X, paperback, p. 296, price: US \$22.00

Critical academic writing and multilingual students is a book written for ESOL writing teachers who truly care about the social and political ramifications of their everyday work. As the author, A. Suresh Canagarajah, is a multilingual writer himself, his experience in learning and teaching ESOL writing lends him a strong ethos in writing such a book that aims to empower multilingual writers. Canagarajah's account of his struggles with publishing in Western academic venues, as also described in his book, *A geopolitics of academic writing* (2002), offers writing teachers valuable insights on how to strategically initiate their ESOL students into academic discourse. Considering the fact that teaching English for academic purposes has become a rather contested, international phenomenon (Muchiri, Mulamba, Myers, & Ndoloi, 1995; You, 2004), this book definitely appeals to a wide audience.

The book is divided into seven chapters. In Chapter 1, "Understanding Critical Writing," Canagarajah frankly spells out his ideological position in treating academic writing and the rationale for the entire book. For him, being "critical" means to "develop an attitude and perspective that enable us to see some of the hidden components of text construction and the subtler ramifications of writing" (p. 1). With such a perspective, writing becomes a social act, a mediated construct shaped by the interplay between writer, reader, and the community. Conditioned by material constraints, writing represents reality, embodies social values, and speaks for the writing self. When teaching multilingual writers, the author suggests, a "difference-as-resource" perspective needs to be taken in order to safeguard writers' dignity. Translated into pedagogical terms, this perspective will value the linguistic and cultural peculiarities that multilingual writers display, allow them to appropriate academic discourse to express their unique voices and identities, and enable them to reconstruct established textual practices and infuse them with oppositional values and meanings.

In Chapter 2, "An Overview of the Discipline," the author reviews the disciplinary tradition of teaching ESOL writing and interrogates the dominant pedagogical assumptions, values and practices. Canagarajah suggests that due to the "structuralist bias" of applied linguistics, much attention in ESOL writing has been paid to product-oriented studies on linguistic and textual structures and process-oriented studies on cognitive strategies of text production. Conflicts experienced by multilingual writers, he argues, are rich and complex resources for ESOL writing researchers to work with and to make critical contributions to "the poetics and politics of writing" (p. 26). Following Raimes

(1991), the author identifies four major approaches in ESOL writing – the form-focused, the writer-focused, the content-focused, and the reader-focused. Then he analyzes how those approaches are oriented to sociopolitical contexts of academic writing and what ideological values they each carry. In the next four chapters, Canagarajah elaborates on how these four traditional focuses in ESOL writing can be used as sites for multilingual writers' critical engagement.

In Chapter 3, "Issues of Form," the author suggests that as grammar and form are ideological, students need to develop a sensitivity to their ideological implications in order to foster independent expression. Canagarajah first critiques current research on grammar treatment within the writing process and considers the place of functional grammar in text structure. It is important, he suggests, that students are engaged in negotiating with grammar, so that they understand grammar as being contextual, ideological, and negotiable. Next, the author critiques the linguistic and cultural determinism in contrastive rhetoric and the ideology of Anglo-American academia which underscores genre studies. Just as periphery scholars have historically resisted the center by infusing their own preferences into academic genres in order to construct multivocal texts, Canagarajah contends, multilingual writers can turn their own linguistic and cultural experiences into precious resources in academic writing.

In Chapter 4, "Issues of Self," the author assesses scholarly discussions of the cognitive, psychological, and affective dimensions of the writing self. Composing process research has enlightened us with respect to writing as a recursive, goal-directed, and interactive process; however, Canagarajah claims, it has largely ignored how social conflicts and material concerns impact one's writing process. By neglecting those factors, the process pedagogy may be difficult to implement fully or appropriately in the classroom. Then he moves on to highlight the distinction between teaching critical thinking and teaching critical practice in L2 writing. While the former is divorced from social positioning by teaching students universal, objective, and rationalistic thinking strategies, the latter emphasizes socially grounded, self-reflexive, and dialogical thinking. Finally, he identifies various strategies of textual negotiation, and urges that multilingual writers have confidence in using their own voice to negotiate their identity, role, and subjectivity in academic discourse.

In Chapter 5, "Issues of Content," Canagarajah first defines knowledge as contingent, personal, rhetorical, social, constructed, and contested in light of postcolonial, feminist, and postmodern theories. Next, he critiques current ESP/EAP practices for adopting a normative attitude to the knowledge of academic disciplines and discouraging students to go beyond the immediate disciplinary discourses. The focus of academic writing, he proposes, should move from knowledge display to broader issues of knowledge creation and distribution. As academic knowledge remains largely Eurocentric, he maintains, the teacher should help students negotiate the existing knowledge and find a strategic entry point into the ongoing disciplinary conversation. Finally, he reviews various nonethnocentric perspectives in treating plagiarism and affirms the value of "positive plagiarism" in student writing, i.e., when students rhetorically appropriate others' texts for their own interests and learning.

In Chapter 6, "Issues of Community," Canagarajah first critiques John Swales's definition of discourse community (1990) for being static; in his view, it fails to account for the dynamics between various communities, the changes accompanying new membership in communities, and discourses inside communities. While engaged in knowledge production, a discourse community has its own vested interests, power relations, and

conflicts. To initiate multilingual writers into academic discourse, Canagarajah particularly endorses the “contact zone” model. In this model, students bring into their writing the values and discourses of their vernacular communities so as to strategically negotiate with the academic discursive conventions and create multivocal genres. Along the same line, Canagarajah encourages teachers to tolerate or even create “safe houses” (p. 182) for their students to practice the discourses of their home communities or develop discourses oppositional to the dominant academic discourse. As writing is a social activity informed by values, perspectives, and human interaction in a community, the teacher should deeply engage students in disciplinary conversations and knowledge production.

In Chapter 7, “Teaching Multiliteracies,” Canagarajah first posits that all work requires an engagement with knowledge, information, and communication in the post-Fordist economy. Therefore, the traditional notion of writing as an isolated and independent activity in ESP is limiting for ESOL students. While many people have celebrated the emergence of new media as a means of equalitarian communication, the author cautions us that the discourses and ideologies represented in cyberspace might disenfranchise multilingual writers. As “the disembodied and dislocated texts in the new media increasingly obscure the contexts and purposes of texts” (p. 223), the teacher should encourage students to critically engage with multimodal texts and computer-assisted pedagogy. Finally, the author concludes the chapter and the book by again inviting teachers to be critical researchers and to focus on the attitudinal changes required to practice critical education.

The book might sound too theoretical to ESOL teachers, particularly those unfamiliar with the rationale and practices of critical pedagogy. The truth is, it is *not*. Canagarajah quotes numerous real-life examples, based on both his and other ESOL teachers’ experiences, to illustrate how multilingual writers have succeeded or failed to critically engage with form, content, the writing self, and the discourse community in which they operate. Featuring a rather humble tone and very few instances of jargon, the book should be readily accessible to most readers. To further enhance writing teachers’ critical consciousness and facilitate their growth as critical teacher-researchers, the author has designed helpful research activities for them at the end of most of the chapters. Some of these activities encourage teachers to reflect upon their own writing education, consider their teaching philosophy, and analyze the ideological undertone of the writing textbooks they use. Some other activities are designed to allow students to critically engage with aspects of academic discourse. For example, students are asked to identify their learning strategies, write journals to reflect upon their modes of negotiating discourses, and conduct ethnography of communication research in various communities. All of these activities add to the book’s value and appeal.

While I thoroughly enjoyed reading the book, I feel uncomfortable about it in one respect. In his critique of previous research and theories in L1 and L2 writing, the author seems to lack historical consciousness. For example, he criticizes Flower and Hayes (1981), Flower et al. (1990) for failing to account for divergent social contexts in their composing models (p. 90), Silva (1993) for discursively constructing a deficient, remedial image of L2 writers (pp. 88–89), and Swales (1990) for failing to account for the dynamics between and power relations inside discourse communities (pp. 164–65). When these names and their works are singled out by the author, they are meant to represent certain schools in writing research. By criticizing these works for being not, or less, critical than his own critical theory of academic writing, Canagarajah presents these scholars and the schools they

represent as being relatively static and failing to account appropriately for historical changes. However, when placed in full historical context, these works, along with their later iterations (such as Flower, 1994; Flower, Long, & Higgins, 2000; Silva, 1997; Swales, 1994) clearly reflect those scholars' critical engagement with writing research and their awareness of the social and ethical considerations impacting on writers, the forms of writing, and the larger community. By relentlessly critiquing those schools, the author seems to imply that there is only one correct version of researching and teaching critical academic writing. In his view, any theoretical formulations which do not directly interrogate the social values, power relations, and hierarchy surrounding academic writing should be labeled as uncritical. However, if the goal of critical academic writing is to empower writers and ultimately affect positive social change, these other "uncritical" schools of ESOL writing have definitely made their own historical, critical contributions.

Interested readers may also consult Benesch's *Critical English for academic purposes* (2001) for other ways of practicing critical academic writing. While Canagarajah focuses on leading students to critically engage with form, content, the writing self, and the discourse community, Benesch look at how to assist ESOL students to negotiate with the instructional context and the professors in paired EAP courses. With a strong belief in the classroom as a site of struggle and a site for students to exercise their rights, Benesch studies how power is exercised and resisted in the classroom. Her students respond to places of unilateral institutional power with questions and complaints; some students even choose to be silent as a form of protest. To bring about change to the instructional context, she encourages the students to write proposals, ask questions, and make suggestions to professors in content areas. This approach represents a viable alternative, or complement, to Canagarajah's views on writing pedagogy.

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Vivian Zamel, Ruth Spack (Eds.), *Crossing the Curriculum: Multilingual Learners in College Classrooms*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ, 2004, p. 240, ISBN 0-8058-4692-1, price \$24.50 (paper)

This collection is a valuable addition to current work on advanced academic literacy in higher education for its rich descriptions of classroom practices grounded in research and personal experiences as well as for the multiple perspectives from which it investigates this topic. *Crossing the curriculum* can be looked at from two perspectives: that of multilingual learners studying at college and that of faculty teaching these students. The book explores teachers' and multilingual students' experiences in a variety of undergraduate courses. It examines these experiences over time and shows "the complex and content-specific nature of students' and teachers' struggles and accomplishments" (ix). The volume is divided into three parts, each of which represents a distinct vantage point from which to consider academic socialization. Part I consists of five chapters written by ESOL and composition researchers. Part II comprises two chapters written by two multilingual students who provide retrospective narrative accounts of their experiences of crossing the curriculum. Part III has six chapters, written by faculty from several academic fields – anthropology, philosophy, nursing, literature, sociology, and Asian American studies – who discuss their attempts to address the needs of multilingual learners in their own classrooms.

Part I starts with Zamel's opening chapter in which she provides a framework within which to consider the remaining chapters. Challenging the view of ESL and writing courses as service courses, she argues that: (a) all faculty are responsible for helping multilingual students develop advanced academic literacy; (b) the faculty across a discipline should take the 'writing to learn' approach seriously and enact it in discipline-specific ways through thoughtful pedagogy; and (c) educators need to listen to what multilingual students themselves have to say about their experiences as college students. Chapters 2–4 present longitudinal case studies of particular students. In Chapter 2, Spack provides a shorter version of her previously published case study (*Written Communication*, 1997) of Yuko, a Japanese female student studying at a private college; she describes the way in which Yuko negotiated academic literacies in her undergraduate studies, following her from her initial struggles to eventual success in her chosen subject, political science.

The critical approach to L2 writing is arguably one of the most significant recent developments in L2 writing pedagogy. A. Suresh Canagarajah provides a thorough discussion of this topic in *Critical Academic Writing and Multilingual Students*. This volume facilitates teacher self-reflection and enables readers to better understand the motivations and pedagogical The critical approach to L2 writing is arguably one of the most significant recent developments in L2 writing pedagogy. A. Suresh Canagarajah provides a thorough discussion of this topic in *Critical Academic Writing and Multilingual Stu... a Suresh Canagarajah*. The main purpose of this paper is to engage with the ideas of Suresh Canagarajah-a highly acknowledged scholar from Penn State University, in the United States of America-on translingual research and practice. In order to do so, an more.Â by Suresh Canagarajah. This article is based on the engagement of a US-based scholar and faculty members in a non-Western university in a mentoring exercise on publishing. It demonstrates how the " list " constructed in a particular academic department in the more.Â While I have analyzed the data for objective research articles on studentsâ€™ writing and professional development elsewhere (i.e., Canagarajah, 2015), I am examining my own development in this article.