

# Genres and Genre Theory in Transition: Specialized Discourses Across Media and Modes

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Anthony Baldry & Paul J. Thibault, 2006. *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis: A Multimedia Toolkit and Coursebook*. London/Oakville, Equinox. 270 pp. \$40/E24.99 (paperback). ISBN 1-904768-07-5.

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Suddenly, multimodality is a hot academic topic. University departments that for decades studied the honourable fields of language & literature – and if adventurous, their interrelations – now rapidly begin to change tack. Whether this is primarily because those in charge realize that the art and communication of the near future will be ever less exclusively verbal in nature or, more banal, because they see their institutional resources dwindle along with their student enrolment – that question shall here remain unanswered.

Anthony Baldry and Paul Thibault present a course book on the transcription and analysis of multimodal text, rooted in Hallidayan semiotics, which connects this monograph to the work of Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen who, also in 2006, launched a modestly revised version of their daring, but not uncontroversial *The Grammar of Visual Design* (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996/2006; for critical discussion, see Forceville, 1999; Bateman et al., 2004). Baldry and Thibault shy away from defining the thorny concept of “multimodality,” taking as their starting point that “there are many other resources that can be used to create texts in addition to the spoken and written word” (p. 4). It transpires that they take the various “semiotic systems” that make up multimodal texts to comprise at least language, gesture, music, and movement (p.1; for another attempt at definition see Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001). And although “semiotics” to some humanities scholars may have the ring of

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