

Spiros A. Moschonas. Σπίρος Α. Μοσχονάς, *Ιδεολογία και γλώσσα*. Athens: Patakis. 2005. Pp. 338. €25.00.

It is rare that an author attempts to clear the ground around such a controversial “keyword” (in Raymond Williams’ terms) as ideology—and, even moreso, in Greek. Spiros A. Moschonas undertakes this task with remarkable originality, grounding his discussion in an in-depth reading of an impressive range of works in a variety of disciplines, resulting in a book that broadens the reader’s understanding of this important subject. His aims are twofold: first, to provide a sound definition of the term and, second, through this, to specify the role and function of linguistic ideologies. To this end, he first studies the political and philosophical underpinnings of the notion, with an emphasis on the important paradigms developed by Destutt de Tracy and by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. He then provides a list of the ten defining features of ideology, a list he expands in the third and final chapter to include a metalinguistic feature that he deploys to discuss ideologies *on* language, *of* language and *in* language. In his wide-ranging examination, the author skilfully employs a variety of approaches drawing on analytical philosophy, semiotics, formal semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and applied linguistics.

The book begins by tracing the genealogy of the term ‘ideology’ back to its original creators, the French *idéologues* of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, focusing in particular on the purported originator of the term, Antoine Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836) and his monumental four-volume *Eléments d’Idéologie*. Moschonas, drawing on the work of noted linguist Sylvaine Auroux, claims that de Tracy’s founding principles, which give priority to the representation (or “idea”) of existence over existence itself and to the speaking subject over the judgment expressed by (presumably) him, have not been neglected by later writers, but in fact they have constituted a common ground for thinking about the subject, while at the same time de Tracy’s call for a science of ideology has been abandoned. The descriptive view of the *idéologues* is contrasted with Marx and Engels’s critical examination of the term in their *Critique of German Ideology*. In this work, Marx and Engels introduced the famous distinction between base and superstructure, as well as the pejorative view of ideology as false consciousness, of which both are deemed by the author as logically simplifying or even naïve. Later Marxist theorists built on these basic views and tried to develop a metatheory of ideology that relied heavily on a strong version of linguistic relativism, a version which fully identified language with thought.

His discussion of these two paradigms leads Moschonas to propose that there is a fundamental distinction between an ideology (ιδεολογία) and its “underlying” conceptual system (ιδεαλογία, as the first Greek translations of the term *idéologie* would have it). The combination of the two fields is, according to the author, based on implication or entailment: an ideology implies a conceptual system but the reverse does not hold (there are many conceptual systems which are not ideological). Accordingly, indexes of an ideology can be traced in language but an ideology cannot be fully reconstructed through its linguistic

features alone. On the basis of this conclusion, in his second chapter Moschonas proposes an index of ideology, predicated on eight defining features, which the author presents in the form of statements (“theses” or “principles”). They are:

1. Ideologies are systems of ideas.
2. They have a social organization and communicative dimension.
3. They are only found in a domain of collective opposition.
4. They are historical phenomena.
5. They are stereotypical.
6. They are defeasible.
7. They employ normative rules, although they can be described by constitutive rules.
8. They are performative, something which in turn implies that each ideology partly corresponds to reality and partly does not.

The first “thesis” is the fundamental one, in the light of which the others should be viewed. Much of the chapter is devoted to explaining in more detail the systematic nature of ideology, and the author does this by elaborating on Roland Barthes’ view of ideology/connotation as a second degree semiotic system built upon the semiotic system of language/denotation. Roughly, linguistic signifiers and signifieds as wholes of signs constitute signifiers for second degree signifieds. To account for how this is done, Moschonas draws on Paul Grice’s notion of implicature, as developed in pragmatics. In other words, first degree signs implicate second degree meanings in non-conventional ways, that is unlike the relation between signifiers and signifieds in language.

Theses two through four on his list relate to the collective aspect of ideology whereas theses five to eight deal with its conceptual or discursive aspects. The author draws freely on philosophical concepts and ideas developed by scholars ranging from David Hume to Hilary Putnam, as well as linguistic and sociological notions drawn from the works of Robin Lakoff and Mark Johnson and Pierre Bourdieu, in order to analyze a number of ideological phenomena, including the Greek language question (το γλωσσικό ζήτημα).

The book’s third chapter focuses more closely on linguistic ideologies, defined simply as ideologies referring to language; i.e., as metalinguistic ideologies. This definition allows the author to distinguish between (meta-)linguistic ideologies and ideologies *in* language: the latter are non-linguistic ideologies; i.e., social ideologies which are implicated through linguistic indexes whereas the former also refer to language and can potentially develop into metalinguistic systems. The involvement of the metalinguistic dimension, drawn from Michael Silverstein’s anthropological linguistics, also allows us to distinguish between language ideologies and linguistic ideologies (in the sense of ideologies of linguistics), since the latter are also metalinguistic systems originating in the science of linguistics. Thus, sociolinguistic variables such as the nasalization of /b/, /d/, /g/ in Greek may be markers or indexes of non-linguistic ideologies (ideologies *in* language), while prescriptive rules on nasalization index a linguistic ideology in ways semiotically akin to scientific accounts of nasalization in linguistics. This

suggested continuity between types of ideology can explain why non-linguistic ideologies may turn into language ideologies or why earlier scientific descriptions of language may appear to later linguists as “pure” ideologies.

Having systematically developed his analysis of ideology, in the last 30 pages of the book Moschonas undertakes a principled, even if sketchy, discussion of two linguistic ideologies, namely language relativism and standardization. The work of Manolis Triantaphyllidis (who thus finally rubs shoulders with Ludwig Wittgenstein) is considered emblematic of the ideology of modern Greek (νεοελληνική κοινή), which, in the last three decades, seems to have given rise to a whole series of language issues in Greece, mentioned in passing (pp. 303–305). It must be pointed out here that this insistence on analyzing the ideology of the *demotacists* is particularly refreshing and indicates a major shift in the treatment of ideas and people, who until recently were regarded as the “sacred cows” of Greek linguistics, especially by claiming a non-ideological standpoint for themselves.

Although the book advances a clear argument, simply to recount it would not do justice to the scope and depth of Moschonas’s analysis. For instance, the detailed presentation in the Appendix of the implications and the presuppositions of his views is a contribution to Greek linguistic analysis on its own. So are many of the extensive, erudite footnotes, though I often had the feeling that important issues had been hastily dealt with in them. To give an example, the affective aspects of ideology and the related central linguistic notion of evaluation, as discussed in the works of Mikhail Bakhtin and Valentin Volosinov, are summarily dismissed. Furthermore, the notation system Moschonas employs and the lack of a bibliography, as well as some stylistic infelicities, significantly reduce the book’s readability.

In the end, since it draws from a variety of disparate fields such as the philosophy of language, political theory, linguistics, and semiotics, the book may disappoint as many readers as it pleases. It would seem, then, that its value resides precisely in its potential to trigger discussion along all the front lines its author so artfully manages to draw for us.