

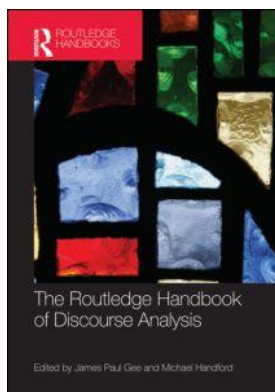
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Part I

Approaches to discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis

Norman Fairclough

Introduction

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) brings the critical tradition of social analysis into language studies and contributes to critical social analysis a particular focus on discourse and on relations between discourse and other social elements (power relations, ideologies, institutions, social identities, and so forth). Critical social analysis can be understood as normative and explanatory critique. It is normative critique in that it does not simply describe existing realities but also evaluates them, assesses the extent to which they match up to various values, which are taken (more or less contentiously) to be fundamental for just or decent societies (e.g. certain standards – material but also political and cultural – of human well-being). It is explanatory critique in that it does not simply describe existing realities but seeks to explain them, for instance by showing them to be effects of structures or mechanisms or forces that the analyst postulates and whose reality s/he seeks to test out (e.g. inequalities in wealth, income and access to various social goods might be explained as an effect of mechanisms and forces associated with ‘capitalism’).

There is a long tradition within critical social analysis, evident for instance in Marx (Marsden, 1999), of viewing social reality as ‘conceptually mediated’, as we might put it – meaning that there are no social events or practices without representations, construals, conceptualizations or theories of these events and practices; or, to put it in different terms, that social realities have a reflexive character, i.e. the way people see and represent and interpret and conceptualize them is a part of these realities. So the ‘objects’ of critical social analysis are, we might say, ‘material-semiotic’ (Jessop, 2004), that is, simultaneously material and semiotic in character, and a central concern is with relations between the material and the semiotic (or ‘discourse’), which I would see as dialectical relations (Fairclough, 2006). A consequence is that critical social analysis has an interdisciplinary character, since the nature of its ‘objects’ requires it to bring together disciplines whose primary concern is with material facets of social realities and disciplines whose primary concern is with semiotic facets. I will argue that it has, more specifically, a ‘trans-disciplinary’ character, in that dialogue across different disciplines is seen as the source for the theoretical and methodological development of each of them (see Jessop and Sum, 2001 on ‘post-disciplinary’ or ‘trans-disciplinary’ research as – in a sense – a return to the ‘pre-disciplinary’ positions of Karl Marx or Adam Smith, for instance; see also Fairclough and Graham, 2002). In these terms, CDA contributes a semiotic emphasis and a ‘point of entry’ into trans-disciplinary critical social analysis (Fairclough, 2009b).

The chapter will be structured as follows. First I shall elaborate what I have said so far about critical social analysis and I shall further discuss CDA as a part of critical social analysis. Second, I shall present one version of CDA, and, third, a trans-disciplinary research methodology associated with it. Fourth and finally, I shall illustrate CDA through a discussion of aspects of

the current financial and economic crisis. The version of CDA is the one which I have been developing and using in my recent work. It differs in various respects from versions in earlier publications (e.g. Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 2010).

Critical analysis of discourse as a part of critical social analysis

What distinguishes critical social analysis from forms of social analysis that are not critical is its emphasis upon existing social realities as humanly produced constraints, which in certain respects unnecessarily reduce human flourishing or well-being and increase human suffering; upon historical explanation of how and why such social realities have come into being; and upon possibilities for transforming existing realities in ways that enhance well-being and reduce suffering. I suggested above that this critique is normative and explanatory, concerned with both values and causes. Some versions of critique are only normative or moral, but I take the (Marxist) view that changing the world for the better depends upon being able to explain how it has come to be the way it is. It is one thing to critique people's language and practices on the grounds that they are racist, but another thing to explain why and how racism emerges or becomes virulent amongst certain people in certain circumstances. A purely normative or moral critique is not enough if the aim is to change social realities for the better; but values, evaluation and moral critique are a necessary part of critical social science (Sayer, 2003).

I referred above to the tradition in critical social science of viewing social reality as 'conceptually mediated', such that the 'objects' of critical social analysis are simultaneously material and semiotic in character. This means that dialectical relations between the material and the semiotic are a necessary focus in both normative and explanatory critique. The version of CDA which I outline below is well placed to bring a focus on these material-semiotic relations into trans-disciplinary critical social research.

CDA has for instance addressed the ideological character of discourse (Fairclough, 1989). Take for example the commonsensical construal of public finances as being in all essentials analogous to household budgets, a construal beloved by former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and by many other politicians, so that for instance governments have to 'budget and save' just as households do. This is open to normative critique as a false claim, in that the analogy does not stand up to serious economic scrutiny, and as an ideological one, in the sense that it is a discourse that can contribute to sustaining an unjust and inequitable socio-economic order. Currently, in the UK for instance, one finds it in practical reasoning by politicians who are in favour of cutting public expenditure and public services to restore public finances in the aftermath of government use of public money to rescue the banks, which not only threatens to turn the recession into depression but arguably places on the general public most of the burden of paying for the (bankers') crisis. To explain the strategy of off-loading onto the public the costs of rescuing the markets from themselves, of which there are many other historical instances, we need to bring in material-structural factors associated with the character of capitalism, but also semiotic factors – including examples of the causal power of common sense and of commonsensical construals in bringing about material effects (particular trajectories within and out of the crisis). Causes can be semiotic as well as material, and CDA can contribute to the project, within critical social science, of showing the relationships between the two.

One version of CDA

In this section I shall briefly present the primary concepts, categories and relations associated with the version of CDA I have recently worked with.

Discourse is commonly used in various senses, including (a) meaning-making as an element of the social process; (b) the language associated with a particular social field or practice (e.g. ‘political discourse’); (c) a way of construing aspects of the world associated with a particular social perspective (e.g. a ‘neo-liberal discourse of globalization’). It is easy to confuse them, so I prefer to use *semiosis* for the first, most abstract and general sense (Fairclough *et al.*, 2004) – which has the further advantage of suggesting that discourse analysis is concerned with various ‘semiotic modalities’, of which language is only one (others are visual images and ‘body language’).

Semiosis is viewed here as an element of the social process, which is *dialectically* related to others. Relations between elements are dialectical in the sense of being different but not ‘discrete’, i.e. fully separate; each one ‘internalizes’ the others without being reducible to them (Harvey, 1996). So social relations, power, institutions, beliefs and cultural values are in part semiotic, i.e. they internalize semiosis without being reducible to it. This means for example that, although we should analyse political institutions or business organizations as partly semiotic objects, it would be a mistake to treat them as purely semiotic, if only because then we couldn’t ask the key question: what is the relationship between semiotic and other elements? CDA focuses not just upon semiosis as such, but on *relations between semiotic and other social elements*. The nature of this relationship varies between institutions and organizations and according to time and place, and it needs to be established through analysis.

The social process can be seen as the interplay between three levels of social reality: social *structures*, *practices* and *events* (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). Social practices ‘mediate’ the relationship between general and abstract social structures and particular and concrete social events; social fields, institutions and organizations are constituted as networks of social practices. In this approach to CDA, analysis is focused on two dialectical relations: between structure (especially social practices as an intermediate level of structuring) and events (or: structure and action, structure and strategy); and, within each, between semiotic and other elements. There are three major ways in which semiosis relates to other elements of social practices and of social events: as a facet of action; in the construal (representation) of aspects of the world; and in the constitution of identities. And there are three semiotic (or discourse-analytical) categories corresponding to these: genre, discourse and style.

Genres are semiotic ways of acting and interacting such as news or job interviews, reports or editorials in newspapers, or advertisements on TV or the internet. Part of doing a job, or running a country, is to interact semiotically or communicatively in certain ways, and such activities have distinctive sets of genres associated with them. *Discourses* are semiotic ways of construing aspects of the world (physical, social or mental) that can generally be identified with different positions or perspectives of different groups of social actors. For instance, the lives of poor people are construed not only through different discourses associated with different social practices (in politics, medicine, social welfare, academic sociology), but through different discourses in each, which correspond to differences of position and perspective. I use ‘construe’ in preference to ‘represent’ in order to emphasize an active and often difficult process of ‘grasping’ the world from a particular perspective (Fairclough, 2009a). *Styles* are identities, or ‘ways of being’, in their semiotic aspect – for instance, being a ‘manager’ in the currently fashionable way, in business or in universities, is partly a matter of developing the right semiotic style.

The semiotic dimension of (networks of) social practices that constitute social fields, institutions, organizations etc. is *orders of discourse* (Fairclough, 1992); the semiotic dimension of events is *texts*. Orders of discourse are particular configurations of different genres, different discourses, and different styles. An order of discourse is a social structuring of semiotic difference, a particular social ordering of relationships between different ways of making meaning – different genres, discourses and styles. So for example the network of social practices that constitutes the field of education, or

a particular educational organization such as a university, is constituted semiotically as an order of discourse. Texts are to be understood in an inclusive sense: they are not only written texts but also e.g. conversations and interviews, as well as the ‘multi-modal’ texts (mixing language and visual images) of television and the internet. Some events consist almost entirely of texts (e.g. a lecture or an interview), in others texts have a relatively small part (e.g. a game of chess).

Discourses that originate in some particular social field or institution (to anticipate the example, neo-liberal economic discourse, which originated within academic economics and business) may be *recontextualized* in others (e.g. in the political field, or in the wider educational field). Recontextualization has an ambivalent character (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999): it can be seen as ‘colonization’ of one field or institution by another, but also as ‘appropriation’ of ‘external’ discourses, often incorporation of discourses into strategies pursued by particular groups of social agents within the recontextualizing field.

Discourses may under certain conditions be *operationalized*, ‘put into practice’ – a dialectical process with three aspects: they may be *enacted* as new ways of (inter)acting, they may be *inculcated* as new ways of being (identities), or they may be physically *materialized*, e.g. as new ways of organizing space in architecture. Enactment and inculcation may themselves take semiotic forms: a new management discourse (e.g. the discourse of marketized ‘new public management’, which has invaded public sector fields like education and health) may be enacted as management procedures, which include new genres of interaction between managers and workers, or it may be inculcated as identities which semiotically include the styles of the new type of managers. The modality is important: I have formulated these processes of operationalization as possibilities (‘may’), because they are not necessary but contingent processes, which may or may not take place depending upon a range of factors and conditions, both material and semiotic (Fairclough *et al.*, 2004).

CDA oscillates as I have indicated, between a focus on *structures* (especially the intermediate level of structuring of social practices) and a focus on *strategies*, a focus on shifts in the structuring of semiotic difference (orders of discourse) and a focus on strategies of social agents that manifest themselves in texts. In both perspectives, a central concern is shifting relations between genres, between discourses and between styles: change in social structuring of relations between them that achieves relative permanence and stability in orders of discourse, and the ongoing working of relations between them in texts. The term *interdiscursivity* is reserved for the latter: the interdiscursivity of a text is a part of its intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992) – a question of what genres, discourses and styles it draws upon, and how it works them into particular articulations. Textual analysis also includes linguistic analysis, and analysis – where appropriate – of visual images and ‘body language’; and these features of texts can be seen as realizing their interdiscursive features.

A trans-disciplinary research methodology

The focus I have just indicated on relations between semiosis and other elements calls for interdisciplinary research – more exactly, it requires CDA to be integrated within frameworks for *trans-disciplinary* research. An example is the framework I have used in recent publications – ‘cultural political economy’, which combines elements from three disciplines: a form of economic analysis, a theory of the state, and CDA (Jessop, 2004; Fairclough, 2006). What distinguishes trans-disciplinary from other forms of interdisciplinary research is that, in bringing disciplines and theories together to address research issues, it sees ‘dialogue’ between them as a source for the theoretical and methodological development of each of them. For example, *recontextualization* was introduced as a concept and as a category in CDA through a dialogue with Basil Bernstein’s sociology of pedagogy, where it originated (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999).

I refer to a ‘methodology’ rather than a ‘method.’ Methodology is to be understood as a trans-disciplinary process of theoretically constructing the *object of research* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) for a research project; particular methods are selected according to how the *object of research* is constructed. So it is not just a matter of ‘applying methods’ in the usual sense, and we cannot so sharply separate theory and method. This version of CDA is associated with a *general* method, which I briefly indicated in the final paragraph of the last section; but the specific methods used for a particular piece of research arise from the theoretical process of constructing its object.

We can identify ‘steps’ or ‘stages’ in the methodology: these are essential parts of the methodology (a matter of its ‘theoretical order’), and, while it does make partial sense to proceed from one to the next (a matter of the ‘procedural order’), the relationship between them in doing research is not simply that of sequential order. For instance, the ‘step’ I refer to below, of constructing the ‘object of research’ (Step 2 of Stage 1), does need to precede subsequent steps, but it also makes sense to ‘loop’ back to it in the light of subsequent steps, seeing the formulation of the object of research as a preoccupation throughout. It is also helpful to distinguish ‘theoretical’ and ‘procedural’ from the ‘presentational’ order one chooses to follow in writing a paper, for instance – other generally rhetorical factors will affect the order in which one presents one’s analysis.

The methodology can be seen as a variant of Bhaskar’s ‘explanatory critique’ (Bhaskar 1986, Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), which can be formulated in four ‘stages’ that can be further elaborated as ‘steps’.

- Stage 1: Focus upon a social wrong, in its semiotic aspects.
- Stage 2: Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong.
- Stage 3: Consider whether the social order ‘needs’ the social wrong.
- Stage 4: Identify possible ways past the obstacles.

Stage 1: Focus upon a social wrong, in its semiotic aspect

CDA is a form of critical social science geared to the better understanding of the nature and sources of social wrongs, the obstacles to addressing them, and possible ways of overcoming those obstacles. ‘Social wrongs’ can be understood in broad terms as aspects of social systems, forms or orders that are detrimental to human well-being and could in principle be ameliorated if not eliminated, though perhaps only through major changes in these systems, forms or orders. Examples might be poverty, forms of inequality, lack of freedom or racism. Of course, what constitutes a ‘social wrong’ is a controversial matter, and CDA is inevitably involved in debates and arguments about this that go on all the time.

We can elaborate Stage 1 in two steps:

Step 1: Select a research topic that relates to, or points up, a social wrong and that can productively be approached in a trans-disciplinary way, with a particular focus on dialectical relations between semiotic and other ‘moments’.

We might for instance conclude that such an approach is potentially ‘productive’ because there are significant semiotic features of the topic that have not been sufficiently attended to. A topic might attract our interest because it has been prominent in the relevant academic literature, or because it is a focus of practical attention in the domain or field at issue (the current crisis, for instance, is both). Topics are often ‘given’, and they sometimes virtually select themselves – who could doubt for instance that ‘immigration’, ‘terrorism’, ‘globalization’ or ‘security’ are important contemporary

topics, with significant implications for human well-being, which researchers should attend to? Selecting such topics has the advantage of ensuring that research is relevant to the issues, problems and wrongs of the day, but it also has the danger that their very obviousness can lead us to take them too much at face value. We cannot assume that such topics are coherent research objects; to 'translate' topics into objects, we need to theorize them:

Step 2: Construct objects of research for initially identified research topics by theorizing them in a trans-disciplinary way.

Let me anticipate the example I shall discuss in the next section: the initially identified research topic is the current financial and economic crisis. This is a huge topic, various aspects of which might productively be approached with a focus on dialectical relations between semiotic and material moments. Constructing objects of research is a trans-disciplinary process, so we would need to decide which relevant bodies of social science and theory to engage with. The 'cultural political economy' framework I mentioned above is a good choice in this case, though one might well want to combine it with other approaches (e.g. on 'moral economy', see Sayer, 2004). Social wrongs we might focus upon include: the largely unquestioned dominance of a 'neo-liberal' economic order that turned out to be deeply flawed, with dire consequences for a great many people; the greed of people like bankers, which contributed to the crisis and to increasing inequalities of wealth and income that have various negative social consequences; the policies of certain governments to make ordinary people bear most of the burden of repairing public finances, depleted as these are as a result of support given to the banks, for instance. Each of these has significant semiotic aspects. One possible construction of an object of research associated with the first of them might be to focus on the neo-liberal 'ideas' (semiotically, discourses) that informed, shaped and were used to legitimize the economic order and on the material effects of these ideas/discourses.

Stage 2: Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong

Stage 2 approaches the social wrong in a rather indirect way, by asking what it is about the way in which social life is structured and organized that prevents the social wrong from being addressed. This requires bringing in analyses of the social order, and one 'point of entry' into this process can be semiotic, which entails selecting and analysing relevant 'texts' and addressing dialectical relations between semiosis and other social elements.

Steps 1–3 can be formulated as follows:

1. Analyse dialectical relations between semiosis and other social elements: between orders of discourse and other elements of social practices, between texts and other elements of events.
2. Select texts, and points of focus and categories for their analysis, in the light of, and appropriately to, the constitution of the object of research.
3. Carry out analysis of texts – both interdiscursive analysis and linguistic/semiotic analysis.

Taken together, these three steps indicate an important feature of this version of CDA: textual analysis is only a part of semiotic analysis (discourse analysis), and the former must be adequately framed within the latter. The aim is to develop a specifically semiotic 'point of entry' into objects of research that are constituted in a trans-disciplinary way, through dialogue between different theories and disciplines. Analysis of texts can effectively contribute to this only in so far as it is located within a wider analysis of the object of research, in terms of dialectical relations between

semiotic and other elements – an analysis that comprehends relations between the level of social practices and the level of events (and between orders of discourse and texts).

Stage 3: Consider whether the social order ‘needs’ the social wrong

It is not awfully obvious what this means, and I shall try to clarify it by again anticipating the example, with respect to a social wrong I identified above: governments trying to make ordinary people pay for the public costs of the crisis. In what sense might the social order ‘need’ this? A broad answer might be to show that capitalism has historically not only asserted the supreme worth of markets and, to varying degrees, the need for them to operate with minimal political and social control, but has also claimed that it is the job of the state to bail them out when periodic (but regular and predictable) crises occur. Stage 3 leads us to consider whether the social wrong in focus is inherent to the social order, whether it can be addressed within it, or only by changing it. Stage 3 is a way of linking ‘is’ to ‘ought’: if a social order can be shown inherently to give rise to major social wrongs, that is a reason for thinking that perhaps it should be changed. This stage also connects with questions of ideology: discourse is ideological in so far as it contributes to sustaining particular relations of power and domination.

Stage 4: Identify possible ways past the obstacles

Stage 4 moves the analysis from negative to positive critique: identifying, with a focus on dialectical relations between semiosis and other elements, possibilities within the existing social process for overcoming obstacles to addressing the social wrong in question. This includes developing a semiotic ‘point of entry’ into research on the ways in which these obstacles are actually tested, challenged and resisted, be it within organized political or social groups or movements or, more informally, by people in the course of their ordinary working, social and domestic lives. A specifically semiotic focus would include, in the case of the crisis, ways in which the discourses, narratives, arguments etc. of business and governments are being contested and replaced by others, as part of struggles against mainstream strategies and in support of alternatives.

Illustration – critical research on the financial and economic crisis

The events of the financial and economic crisis are relatively clear, but its causes are more contentious. There are numerous explanatory accounts of it that differ, for instance in the relative weight they give to structural causes (e.g. recurrent economic ‘cycles’) as opposed to agential or ‘subjective’ causes (e.g. the failures – greed, incompetence etc – of key agents such as bankers, government ministers or regulators). Most explanatory accounts directly or indirectly recognize that semiosis, or discourse, needs to figure in explanations. For instance Roger Bootle, a respected British economist and consultant, after identifying eight major causal factors, concludes that it is nevertheless possible to identify a single cause that underlies them: the impact of economic *ideas* (Bootle, 2009), most especially the ‘efficient market hypothesis’ – the idea, in its extreme form, that markets are always right, which in many cases ceased to be treated as a hypothesis and came to be treated as an established fact. What Bootle calls ‘ideas’ amounts to semiosis or discourse – and, more specifically, we might say a Discourse of (or about) economic (including financial) activities (a ‘big’ Discourse that subsumes a number of ‘small’ discourses – Gee, 1999), which (amongst other things) construes ‘markets’ in certain ways (as ‘knowing best’, as efficient, as rational, etc). So potent and prestigious was this Discourse that key players in business, government and financial governance failed to see or refused to see what were for some more perceptive commentators the

extreme dangers of the levels of debt that were building up, some of the so-called ‘innovations’ in finance, and so forth. The Discourse, we might say, became dogma. It was also extensively recontextualized, for instance within the International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank ‘Washington Consensus’, which was internationally promoted, if not imposed, as part of a model for capitalism that informed processes of ‘transition’ from socialism to capitalism in Central and Eastern Europe. And it was operationalized, enacted in practices (and, semiotically, genres) such as those associated with the ‘light-touch’ regulation of banks and other financial institutions, and inculcated (through workplace disciplines, the mass media and education) in the identities of economic ‘subjects’ (producers and consumers) and, semiotically, into their styles.

Analysing, interpreting and explaining these processes might be part of one possible piece of research oriented towards the crisis, which might seek to assess the impact of this Discourse and its operationalizations in the establishment, maintenance and legitimation of the neo-liberal order, but also to address the question of how the Discourse might have contributed to the apparent incapacity of bankers, regulators, governments and so on to understand the dangers of that order and to anticipate its crises. But it follows from what I have said above that the object of such a piece of research should be constructed in a trans-disciplinary way. For instance, from cultural political economy (CPE) one might take a theory of structuration that focuses on dialectical relations between structures and strategies and includes a framework for explaining how, from a variety of strategies, certain ones come to be selected and retained (and, in CDA terms, recontextualized and operationalized). What are the factors and conditions (both semiotic and material/structural) that led to the selection and retention of neo-liberal strategy (from the 1970s onwards) and of its semiotic moments (including the Discourse discussed above) rather than of other strategies (Fairclough *et al.*, 2004)? CPE also includes ways of addressing the processes of systemic and governance failure, which link this historical account of neo-liberalism to the current crisis.

These observations roughly address issues related to Stage 1 of the methodology, identifying a social wrong (the predominance of a flawed economic order, whose failure has caused serious damage to many) with a significant semiotic aspect and construction of research objects for addressing it. If we turn to Stage 2, the primary question is: what obstacles have there been, and are there still, to addressing the social wrong? Let us focus on the current period. Trans-disciplinary analysis of the contemporary political–economic situation might suggest that the neo-liberal order, and Discourse, have been weakened to the point that the obstacles to surpassing it that one might have identified a few years ago are much less daunting. But this does not mean that any new strategy for replacing neo-liberalism, whatever that may be, would necessarily address in its essentials the central wrong at issue – a new strategy may not overcome the problems of an economic order with unjust effects (e.g. in terms of inequalities of wealth and income) and a liability to devastating crises. Analysis of recent and current texts, for instance from the coverage of, commentary on and debate over the crisis in the political public sphere of countries like Britain and the USA, can be used to identify the range and positioning of discourses (or Discourses), and can be integrated within a trans-disciplinary framework based upon CPE which, amongst other things, maps d/Discourses onto strategies for responding to the crisis and for moving towards an economic order that may facilitate economic recovery. One tendency that might be focused upon, for instance, is for certain governments, including the British one, to pursue a strategy for the restitution of the *status quo ante* with only relatively minor modifications of regulatory systems.

Here is, for example, a short extract from a speech by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to the Foreign Press Association in London, January 2009:

We know now that financial institutions are international, that capital flows are global, but their regulators and supervisors have remained so far only national. So we have highly

interdependent financial flows which dwarf world GDP, but as yet no effective system for policing them. And as the downturn spreads across the world we are for the first time seeing cross-border flows growing more slowly than domestic flows and we are seeing banks favouring their domestic lending over foreign lending. And this is a trend which must be halted if we are to avoid the risk of a damaging worldwide spiral of deleveraging and then deglobalisation with adverse consequences for all our economies. We can sustain a consensus for an open global economy where countries can draw on their deep capital markets to finance faster development which benefits us all, but only if we can provide also a means of responding when these markets fail.

A short extract can only give a partial impression of the flavor of the whole speech. The ‘globalisation’ that Brown wishes to defend is what we can reasonably call ‘neo-liberal globalisation’, and he is effectively defending the neo-liberal capitalism which is in crisis (implicitly therefore construing the crisis as a crisis *in* rather than *of* neo-liberalism). The speech incorporates without modification the established legitimizing narrative for this form of globalization, ‘globalisation produces growth which produces prosperity for all and reduces poverty’, despite the flaws that have been exposed in this model (e.g. long-term tendencies to reduce wages and to increase the gap between rich and poor), which he does not address, and despite its failure and the consequential crisis. He construes features of this model (‘financial institutions are international’, ‘capital flows are global’, ‘highly interdependent financial flows which dwarf world GDP’) as simply the way the world now is, and condemns ‘deleveraging’, which might be seen (in an appropriate form and within appropriate limits) as a reasonable response to the excessive ‘leveraging’ which was widely seen as a cause of the financial crisis, as a ‘risk’ and as a ‘damaging spiral’, which would have ‘adverse consequences for all our economies’. At the same time he implies that ‘consensus’ for such an ‘open global economy’ could be at risk. His solution to this danger is international regulation, ‘which can provide a means of responding when these markets fail’, presupposing that they do and will fail. From this speech and other evidence it seems that the British government is committed to restoring the *status quo ante* with minor modifications, in some cases drawing upon the d/Discourses and narratives of the more triumphant years of neo-liberalism in the reasons they give for the actions and policies they propose. (See Fairclough and Fairclough, forthcoming, for an approach to the analysis of practical reasoning in political discourse applied to political responses to the crisis.)

Stage 3, addressing the question of whether the social order needs the social wrong, gives rise to the question of whether it is possible within a capitalist system to develop and implement a new strategy, which can overcome the injustices and the dangers of crisis. Although one might argue that these are to an extent endemic in all forms of capitalism, one might also argue that forms of capitalism have differed markedly in the extent to which they have mitigated these tendencies and dangers, which would indicate that it is in principle possible for a new form of capitalism, which mitigates the wrongs of neo-liberalism, to emerge, though that leaves open the question of whether it is practicable in existing conditions. For instance, different forms of capitalism share a commitment to constant ‘growth’, yet arguably the environmental and resource (oil, water) crises, which co-exist with the current financial and economic crisis, render this commitment deeply problematic and raise the question of whether capitalism as such can provide real solutions to our multiple crises.

Let me turn to Stage 4. The sort of analysis I am suggesting should include strategies and associated D/discourses for transforming the existing financial and economic order in ways that might begin to address the social wrongs at issue, including more radical strategies for a substantive

social control of the functioning of markets (and in some cases permanent nationalization of key parts of the banking system, for instance) and strategies for a 'Green New Deal' that address also the environmental crisis. The aim of trans-disciplinary analysis would include identifying the conditions of possibility and the obstacles to such strategies and D/discourses being selected and retained. Here is a short extract from Neil Lawson and John Harris 'No turning back' (*New Statesman*, March 2009):

The starting point for a better future is the simple recognition that the Good Society is incompatible with market fundamentalism. ... Markets never contain themselves. Instead, they always look for new opportunities to make more profit. This leads to no end of disastrous and dysfunctional outcomes: among them, the commercialisation of the lives of our children and the rise of the kinds of complex financial instruments that have brought the whole house down. To turn society in a different direction, markets will have to be regulated and trammled by social forces – the state and civil society. We must put in place the institutions that allow society to make the market its servant.

The authors represent, or imagine, a society in which markets are the 'servant' of social aspirations and goals for 'the Good Society', and they are 'regulated and trammled' by 'the state and civil society'. Ways to achieve this are only indicated in the most general terms ('put in place ... institutions'), but the strategy of mobilizing 'civil society' as well as the state in order to force markets into serving societal rather than just economic (e.g. 'growth') ends is a radical one compared with Brown's and others'. Embedding CDA within CPE allows us to explore both the semiotic and the material conditions of possibility for, and obstacles to, such a strategy and Discourse being selected and retained – the obstacles in this case would seem to be currently very severe.

These comments draw only upon a part of the version of CDA presented earlier. An issue that can be brought into the analysis is the recontextualization of d/Discourses, which is relevant to the resonance and impact that are germane to the selection of certain d/Discourses, but not others. For example, in the summer of 2009 media coverage of the crisis in Britain came to be dominated by 'repairing public finances' and 'reducing government debt' and by the 'cuts' in public spending, which were portrayed as the main necessary means of achieving this. The question of what 'cuts' the competing political parties would make, how deeply and how quickly, came to dominate the front pages of much of the press. There is a good case for arguing that it was Conservative Party agitation on this issue that was extensively recontextualized, not only in the news, but also in the editorial columns of much of the press, and succeeded in focusing the crisis agenda on the willingness to make deep and speedy cuts. When Gordon Brown's speech at the Labour Party conference in October 2009 partially took up this 'cuts' agenda at the expense of his previous construal of public spending during the crisis as an 'investment', these sections of the press were triumphant – 'At last Brown uses the c-word!' The issue of operationalization (and the associated questions of how d/Discourses come to be enacted in practices and, semiotically, in genres, inculcated in identities and, semiotically, in styles, and materialized in the physical world) will on the other hand become particularly significant as the process of selecting particular d/Discourses, and achieving a measure of hegemony for them, advances. Thus, since the elections of May 2010 in the UK, a coalition government (Conservatives plus Liberal Democrats) has begun to operationalize the 'cuts' agenda by substantially changing and reducing the provision of welfare and public services. (See Chiapello and Fairclough (2002) for a discussion of the operationalization of discourses in the process of emergence of the 'new capitalism' from the 1970s.)

Conclusion

I have focused here on one version of CDA that differs both from versions I have used myself in earlier work and from versions developed and used by other CDA practitioners (see Fairclough and Wodak, 1997 and Meyer and Wodak, 2009 for a number of these). CDA is a loosely interconnected set of different approaches, which differ for instance in the relative weight given to social as opposed to cognitive issues, or in the relative centrality given to social change (and therefore to concepts and categories such as interdiscursivity and recontextualization).

The version of CDA I have briefly presented here, and its precursors in earlier publications (e.g. Fairclough, 1992; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), are strongly focused upon shifting articulations of genres, discourses and styles in texts (interdiscursivity) and in orders of discourse. The interdiscursive analysis of texts has been seen to have a crucial mediating role between the linguistic analysis of texts (and, where appropriate, the 'multi-modal' analysis of relations between language, body language, visual images, etc.) and whatever forms of social analysis are germane to the particular piece of research being undertaken. On the one hand, shifts in the articulation of genres, discourses and styles in texts (or: the 'hybridisation' or 'mixing' of different genres, different discourses, different styles) are realized in changes in linguistic (and multi-modal) features of texts; on the other hand, these interdiscursive shifts are the semiotic element or 'moment' of social changes, and they are dialectically interconnected with other, non-semiotic elements or 'moments'. Of course, not every interdiscursive novelty in texts amounts to social change in a substantive sense. There is a huge amount of variation in texts, but which variants come to be selected and retained (Jessop, 2004) depends upon a range of non-semiotic as well as semiotic factors and conditions. Where interdiscursive shifts are selected and retained, we can identify changes in the orders of discourse, i.e. changes in social practices in their semiotic aspect. To put the point in different terms, changes that occur in concrete events (texts) are selectively and contingently retained as changes in structures, changes in semiotic structures (orders of discourse) that are dialectically operationalized in changes in non-semiotic structures.

Further reading

Fairclough, N. (2000) *New Labour, New Language?* London: Routledge.

An accessible application of CDA to analysis of political discourse, written for a general, non-specialized readership.

Fairclough, N. (2003) *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London: Routledge.

Discusses in some detail methods of textual analysis in CDA, which I have not said much about in this paper. It also shows how textual analysis can be selectively used to strengthen social research on a variety of issues.

Lemke, J. (1995) *Textual Politics: Discourse and Social Dynamics*. London and Bristol, PA: Taylor and Francis.

A powerful presentation of an approach to CDA that differs in various ways from the one I have presented here.

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