

MEANINGS AND THE MEDIA  
STUDIES IN THE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF MEDIA TEXTS

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The work that comprises this thesis has been published, or is forthcoming, in the journals or books which are listed below. The regulations allow for the inclusion of jointly authored material; but in the case of jointly-authored papers or chapters, only those sections have been included in the thesis which were originally authored by myself.

- Chapter One: (1) "Language and power: a critical review of *Studies in the Theory of Ideology*, by John B. Thompson  
in *Media, Culture and Society* Vol. 8 (1986), 41-64.
- (2) "Review of Macdonnell (1986) *Theories of Discourse*,  
and  
Sperber and Wilson (1986) *Relevance*"  
prepared for *Scottish Journal of Media Education*
- (3) "Review of Hak et al (1985) *Working Papers in Discourse Analysis, Vol 6*  
in *Sociolinguistics*, Vol XVI (1986) No. 2.

Chapter Two: From Hartley and Montgomery, "Representations and relations: ideology and power in press and TV news"  
in van Dijk, T.A. (ed) (1985) *Discourse and Communication: New Approaches to the Analysis of Mass Media Discourse and Communication* Berlin: de Gruyter.



Chapter Three: From (1986) *An Introduction to Language and Society*  
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Chapter Four: Expanded and rewritten from sections of Montgomery,  
Tolson & Garton (1988) "Scripts, metaphors, and the  
general election", paper presented at the ITSC  
conference, London, July 1988, and to be published in  
Italian in *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia* and in  
English in *ELR Journal*, Vol. 3, 1989. Forthcoming in  
Scannell (ed) *A Reader in Broadcast Talk*, London: Sage.

Chapter Six: "DJ Talk",  
in *Media, Culture and Society* Vol. 8 (1986) 421-440;  
reprinted in Coupland, N. (ed) (1988) *Discourse  
Stylistics* London: Croom Helm.

~~Chapter Seven:~~ "Direct address, audience, and genre"  
in *PARLANCE: The Journal of the Linguistics and Poetics  
Association*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1988) Winter, pp. 185-202

Chapter Eight: "'Our Tune': a study of a broadcast discourse genre"  
forthcoming in Scannell (ed) *A Reader in Broadcast  
Talk* London: Sage.

These chapters, therefore, span a four year period from 1985 to 1989.  
Chapters Five and Nine have been written especially for the Ph.D.; and  
other passages have been added to help to contextualise the published  
work.

Many persons - too numerous to name - have helped to shape this research, but I owe a particular debt to present colleagues at the University of Strathclyde, and former colleagues at the Polytechnic of Wales, the University of Bristol, and elsewhere; and also to many students, whose critical reactions often provided a crucial impetus to developing the work reported below. Looking back, however, through the work submitted here, I can see that profound debts are owed to those who taught me - especially at the University of Birmingham. John Sinclair, Stuart Hall, Malcolm Coulthard, Michael Green, Richard Hoggart, David Lodge were inspirational, challenging, rigorous, demanding, thoughtful, funny, wise, and knowledgeable in different combinations. A fellow-student at the time - Andrew Tolson - is still a continuing source of ideas, many of which he will probably recognise in the following pages. To all these people, I owe a great deal, and they are not adequately acknowledged in the pages that follow. Nor are two other scholars whose influence was exercised through their writing - Michael Halliday and Raymond Williams. If they also lack due acknowledgement, it is because their influence on this research is all pervasive; hardly a page has escaped the imprint of their work.

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ABSTRACT:

The thesis explores aspects of language in the modern media of communication, with particular reference to its role in the production and circulation of ideologies (Ideologies are understood in this context as systems of representation whose effect is to sustain relations of domination). Investigation is conducted by means of case studies on a variety of media texts ranging from print journalism through to TV and radio. These case studies suggest that ideology in text may be analysed using various techniques from linguistics, including - for example - the analysis of vocabulary, and the analysis of grammatical systems such as transitivity. But the case studies also suggest that ideologies operate in the form of implicit background assumptions which may be made analytically explicit by drawing upon recent developments in linguistic pragmatics.

In addition to engaging with issues of language and ideology in the study of media texts, the case studies are also concerned with the ways in which such texts shape up to their audiences, particularly through the adoption of modes of direct address. Direct address is considered to be an important indicator of genres in media discourse; and the thesis includes a detailed study of a one particular genre from popular day-time radio. The research is thus seen as occupying a middle ground between linguistics and media studies. It begins with media discourse as projecting dominant forms of common sense but it concludes with issues concerning the relation of these discourses to their putative audiences.



**PART ONE**

**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

## INTRODUCTION

Mainstream research in linguistics has been criticised - not unfairly - for paying undue attention to abstract relations of form with consequent neglect of the social realities that shape, and are shaped by, acts of meaning. (See, for example, Pêcheux, 1982; Vološinov, 1973). Equally, however, we need to recognise that the close study of forms of social life - constituted, as they are, in and by language - requires attention to those very details of signification that linguistics can bring into sharp focus. This thesis attempts to hold both dimensions - linguistic form and social reality - in some kind of productive tension. As such, it is not a work purely of linguistic research. Nor, however, is it best understood as squarely within the tradition of sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics has produced its most rigorously persuasive work in studies of variation where it has taken an aspect of the social order - such as class, gender, or status - and modelled a correlation with a small scale feature of the linguistic order - such as phonemic alternation (Trudgill, 1974), tag questions (Lakoff, 1975) or copula deletion (Labov, 1972). But, in so doing, it has tended on the one hand to take the social order as somehow given in advance independently of language; and on the other hand, with its emphasis on surface features, it has tended to neglect language as a shaper of meanings. And so it has not been conspicuously successful (pace Bernstein, 1971; and Halliday, 1978) at integrating the study of acts of meaning with the study of social formations.

The papers that comprise this thesis do not straightforwardly start from a linguistic or sociolinguistic problem. Instead they might best be seen as forms of cultural analysis conducted on media texts and informed by

linguistics - in other words, as various attempts to answer the question: 'how might linguistics contribute to cultural analysis?' Cultural analysis, of course, can start with texts from anywhere within the culture - from playground rhymes to laundrette chat. The justification for focussing on media texts is primarily that they are massively available in the public domain. And this is not merely a matter of ease of access to them for research purposes. It is also a question of them being major common texts within the culture at large. They materialise and rehearse possible meanings for broad sections of society all at the same time (even if not all in the same way for everyone.) Indeed, following Althusser (1971) and Hall (1982), I take contemporary British society to be one composed of social formations which are structured in dominance; and I assume that the media are - in the public domain - powerful agencies (or apparatuses in Althusser's term) for the maintenance and reproduction of these relations of dominance. In the light of these assumptions, the thesis addresses questions of the following type:

(1) In cultural analysis, issues of ideology and power are crucial for understanding how society reproduces itself as structured in dominance. What aspects of linguistics are most central to understanding and revealing the operation of ideology and power in the discourses of the media?

(2) While many of the studies undertaken below emphasise the role of the text in the production of meanings, they do nonetheless pose the question of the precise nature of this role. How much of meaning is a matter of explicit encoding in the text and how much is a matter of implied background assumptions? Chapters 2 and 3, for instance, focus on textual features themselves, whereas chapter 4 addresses more directly the role of background assumptions in interpretation.



At the same time, it needs to be stressed that these questions are posed for the most part not in the form of theoretical debates (with the possible exception of chapter 6) but in the context of specific case studies of particular texts or genres drawn from the media - from print journalism, such as news stories in the Daily Mail or the Sunday Express, to TV news during the general election, through to disk jockey talk on Radio One. Each of these media poses particular problems of analysis; and a growing concern of the chapters below is how to characterise the differences between one genre of media discourse and another. Indeed, while remaining always concerned with textual particulars, the focus of the thesis moves, particularly in chapters 6, 7, & 8, towards the relation between specific discursive genres and the publics who comprise their audience.

Part One of the thesis, however, consists of reviews that were written between 1984 and 1989, which are included on the grounds that they influenced the thinking behind the papers that comprise the remaining sections as they were developing. Reviewing Thompson's *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* helped to confirm the lines of an approach to ideology in text which I was already using in analyses of newspaper coverage of the miners' strike (1983/4) (with debts to Halliday, 1973; Burton, 1982; and Kress and Hodge, 1979), and in the analysis of a page from the Sunday Express. (See Part Two, below.) At that time, however, I had wanted to allow for the separation of the conduct of power within discourse from the expression of ideology, on the grounds that the representational or ideational function of language is not all of the time implicated in all discourses. Thompson's book helped to clarify what was at stake in this separation, since he does in effect argue that they consist of two sides of the same phenomenon. Ideology, in his account, consists of meaning in

the service of the prevailing power relations. While this helps to clarify the role of ideology at the societal level, I still believe this leaves questions unanswered about the constitution of power relations themselves at the level of the local management of discourse. And the analyses that I had just completed on the press also made me alert to some of the difficulties involved in identifying the relation between ideology and language in textual analysis. These inevitably surface in the review.

Reviewing Macdonell's (1986) *Theories of Discourse* and Sperber & Wilson's (1986) *Relevance* was important for the implicit contrast it provided between two traditions of work - anglo-american work on the pragmatics of discourse versus French theories of discourse (specifically Althusser, Pêcheux, and Foucault.) Very little work has explicitly attempted to chart possible connections between the two traditions - notable exceptions being Cameron's (1985) work on language and gender and Fairclough's (1989) work on language and power. My own work remains closer to the anglo-american tradition than any other, but I have tried to operate in that tradition with an awareness at the same time of the kinds of problematic mapped so usefully in Macdonell's book. Sperber & Wilson's relevance theory on the other hand is an attempt to reorient the whole basis of linguistic pragmatics. In the last analysis I remain to be convinced that they have succeeded in reducing all pragmatic principles to one - the principle of relevance. (See also in this respect the extremely thorough and detailed review by Levinson, 1989.) But they very ably marshal the arguments against meaning as purely the product of coded expressions. Thus, their work provided an important impetus for the study of scripts and background assumptions reported in Part Three, below.

Interestingly, the third book reviewed in Part One - the collection edited by Hak et al (1985) - does take up the analytical challenge posed by work such as that of Vološinov (1973) and Pêcheux (1982) in their theorising of the relation between ideology and language. Many of the essays attempt to provide formal methods for the analysis of ideology in particular texts. However, where these have been drawn from linguistics, they have tended to skip a whole generation of linguistic inquiry, drawing their inspiration in the main from Harris's (1952) paper 'Discourse Analysis', in *Language* (Vol. 28, No. 1). Very little of recent linguistic work figures in their analyses and the purely formal procedures pioneered by Harris do not seem always the most apt for investigating meanings and ideology. Many of the papers that comprise Parts Two to Four, below, consist of attempts to model meanings in discourses in precise and replicable ways.



REVIEW OF:

JOHN B. THOMPSON (1984) STUDIES IN THE THEORY OF IDEOLOGY

CAMBRIDGE: POLITY PRESS

*1.0 THEORIES OF IDEOLOGY*

Thompson's book is a collection of essays written by him between 1979 and 1984, all with one exception published before, but gathered here together in one volume. The essays critically review the work of thinkers such as Bourdieu, Ricouer, Faye, Pecheux, Habermas and others, evaluating them in terms of the degree to which they meet certain basic requirements for an adequate theory of ideology. These basic requirements or principles may be summarised as follows.

1.1 Ideology is more than a world view, value system or set of beliefs which members of a society hold in common and which thereby serves to guarantee or underwrite the cohesion of the social order. In the last analysis its most fundamental characteristic is that it serves to maintain relations of power and domination.

1.2 The fragmented character of modern industrial society also helps maintain relations of power and domination. Its stability is sustained by the divisions between groups and factions. Ideology participates in this process not as a single unifying force, but enters differentially into the social life of different groups to confirm, legitimate or underwrite their distinctive position within the overall social formation. Thompson's concern, therefore, is to redirect the theory of ideology "away from the search for collectively shared values and towards the study of the complex ways in which meaning is mobilised for the maintenance of relations of domination." (p.5) This is because "ideology operates, not so much as a coherent system of statements imposed on a population from above, but rather through a complex series of mechanisms whereby meaning is mobilised, in the discursive practices of everyday life, for the maintenance of relations of domination." (p.63)

1.3 The production of meaning in everyday life rests heavily upon linguistic activity. Since language is our principal mode of making sense of the world and since meaning is constituted within it, then the study of ideology necessarily involves the study of language. "The analysis of ideology is, in a fundamental respect, the study of language in the social world, since it is primarily within language that meaning is mobilized in the interests of particular individuals and groups." (p. 73)

1.4 A theory of ideology must be able to stand outside ideology and transcend its subordinating interests. It must provide criteria for assessing the relative truth value of statements about the social world. It should, therefore, avoid retreating into wholesale relativism (in the manner, for example, of Hindess and Hirst, 1977). But it should also avoid claiming for itself a specious and arbitrary status as 'science' (in the manner, for example, of Althusser, 1971).

These basic principles emerge out of Thompson's critiques of individual thinkers. Thus, Ricouer, for example, is criticised for conceptualising ideology in neutral terms and stressing its integrative role rather than its role in the exercise of power (see 1.1); Bourdieu is found wanting for not taking seriously enough the problems of providing rational grounds for conducting the critique of ideology (see 1.4); and so on. It would be misleading, however, to suggest that the essays are purely destructive exercises, since positive contributions are drawn from these same thinkers. The necessity for providing rational grounds for the critique of ideologies, for example, (see 1.4) is drawn from Habermas who earns two essays and something of a special status by being placed at the end of the book. But although Habermas highlights the importance of circumventing or deconstructing ideology by a process of rational argumentation, he is not thought to have provided a workable procedure for establishing the rational grounds on which such argument might proceed.



## *2.0 THEORIES OF IDEOLOGY AND METHODS OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS.*

To conclude the book in this way might be somewhat self defeating, were it not for the fact that Thompson does develop his own substantive theory of ideology in a long and centrally placed essay, containing hitherto unpublished material, entitled 'Theories of Ideology and Methods of Discourse Analysis: towards a framework for the analysis of ideology'. I shall concentrate most of my remarks on this essay, since the critiques of individual thinkers all converge upon it like spokes upon the hub of a wheel.

Thompson's central concern in this essay is his claim that "the analysis of ideology is in a fundamental respect the study of language in the social world, since it is primarily within language that meaning is mobilised in the interests of particular individuals and groups." (p73). The essay itself falls into three parts, the first of which is concerned mostly with ideology and critically reviews the work of Seliger, Gouldner, and Hindess and Hirst. It shares the same procedure as many of the essays on individual thinkers and serves mainly to reinforce the basic principles stated above. Thus Seliger employs a notion of ideology that is essentially consensual and integrative rather than critical (see 1.1); Gouldner makes a positive contribution by recognising the role of language in the circulation of ideology, but overemphasises the written mode to the almost total exclusion of everyday interactive uses of language (see 1.3); and Hindess and Hirst in their account of ideology adopt a relativist position which leaves them with no point of critical purchase for the dissection of particular ideologies (see 1.4).

### **2.1 Methods of Discourse Analysis**

If the prime focus of Part One of the essay is ideology, then the major concern of Part Two is language, in particular the work of (i) English

discourse analysts, (ii) sociologists engaged in conversational analysis, and (iii) critical linguists such as Fowler, Kress, Hodge and Trew. (See Fowler et. al., 1979; and Kress and Hodge, 1979)

(i) Discourse Analysis: Thompson concentrates here on the work of Sinclair, Coulthard and associates at Birmingham University (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975; Coulthard, 1978; Coulthard and Montgomery, 1981; Burton, 1980; and Stubbs, 1983). The major aim of this work has been to explicate how utterances by successive speakers are coordinated together in the conduct of spoken interaction. In this respect Sinclair and Coulthard's work coincided with, and partly anticipated, a significant shift of interest within linguistics from the syntax and semantics of the sentence to the syntax and pragmatics of the speech event; a shift from the internal constitution of the sentence to the external relations of one utterance with another and their role in constituting a discourse. Their major claims involve proposals concerning the basic unit of spoken interaction, a unit which they call the exchange. 'Exchanges' have a minimum two part structure consisting of an 'Initiation' and a 'Response'. Initiations may be realised by, for example, 'elicitations' (requesting information), 'informatives' (giving information), or directives (requesting action); and these predict variously 'replies', 'acknowledgement', or an appropriate action as 'Response'. In some respects these proposals are similar to those made by Conversational analysts concerning Adjacency Pair formats such as

QUESTION	-----	ANSWER
SUMMONS	-----	ANSWER
COMPLIMENT	-----	COMPLIMENT RESPONSE
OFFER	-----	ACCEPT/REFUSE

where the nature of the first part of the pair predicts that of the second part of the pair, or predicts at least what would be a relevant type of response in that position. Where Sinclair and Coulthard differ is in the relatively more abstract and more formalised nature of their



proposal, and in the fact that they allow for a third position, known as 'Follow-Up', in their structure. Exchanges, then, may comprise three parts and their account is intended to provide for the coherence as discourse units of examples such as the following:

Ex. 1

A: D'you have the right time? INITIATION: elicitation  
B: It's ten to eleven. RESPONSE: reply  
C: Thanks. FOLLOW-UP: acknowledge

Ex. 2

Doctor: What were you doing at the time? INITIATION: elicitation  
Patient: Coming home in the car RESPONSE: reply  
Doctor: I see FOLLOW-UP: accept

Ex. 3

Teacher: If your mum was going to make a cardigan or a jumper  
what material would she use? INITIATION: elicitation  
Pupil: Wool RESPONSE: reply  
Teacher: Wool FOLLOW-UP: accept  
good girl evaluate

The major innovation of this work is precisely in proposing a domain of linguistic structure that transcends the boundaries of the isolated monologic utterance or the decontextualised sentence. Exchanges as a unit of discourse are constituted out of the contributions of more than one speaker. They are collaboratively and intersubjectively constructed and by proposing them as a basic unit of discursive organisation the Birmingham group was breaking out of the prevailing linguistic paradigms that took the sentence as its basic unit of analysis.

Thompson, however, takes issue with this approach on three grounds. His first objection is that it reveals nothing about the content of the discourse.

"the discourse analysts have tended to emphasise form and structure at the expense of content....they...have tended to neglect the question of what is said in discourse, that is, the question of meaning and of the interpretation of meaning." (p.8) They have a "tendency to displace content by structure" (p.106).

There are subtle shifts in the way this objection is put. Thus, neglect of content (in favour of form) becomes the neglect of what is said. The implied contrast here, presumably, is between what is said in the discourse and what is done; between, in the terms of Austin (1962), the locutionary and illocutionary aspects of utterances. And it is certainly true to say that this tradition of discourse analysis is much more concerned with utterances as illocutionary force than as locutionary object. I am surprised, however, that Thompson should object to this, since it is precisely this emphasis on utterance as action that has most potential for displaying the socially interactive character of language use. Thompson himself argues in favour of this position in his Introduction:

"Did not Austin remind us that speaking is a way of acting and not simply a way of reporting or describing what is done, so that an adequate account of language must take into consideration the various kinds of things we do, and the various conditions which render these things possible and appropriate, when we utter speech acts?" (p.6)

Indeed, if anything the Birmingham work takes the concern with speech acts a stage further because it treats them not in isolation as the unitary product of an individual speaker in a hypothetical situation (as in speech act theory) but as contributions by successive speakers to a jointly constructed discourse.

Arguably, the overriding emphasis on 'action within the discourse' led, initially at least, to a very narrow definition of meaning in the Birmingham work (but not, I think, as Thompson claims, to its ultimate



neglect). In Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) "the meaning of an utterance" is defined as its "predictive assessment of what follows", which specifically delimits the scope of meaning at that stage of the work to matters of sequential constraints on the placement of utterances within the discourse. But this did not preclude later work which brought additional layers of meaning within the purview of the analysis. Berry (1981) did in fact present proposals to deal with the exchange as a multi layered phenomenon, involving ideational meanings (the negotiation of propositions), interpersonal meanings (the distribution of knowledge), in addition to the structural meanings focused on by Sinclair and Coulthard. And this broadening of the kinds of meaning encompassed within the analysis had already begun with Burton's (1978) work which had proposed categories such as 'Challenge' and 'Support' as part of the structure of exchanges in casual conversation. My own work on monologue discourse (Montgomery, 1977) was already beginning to use semantically loaded categories such as 'recall', 'qualify', 'restate' and 'comment'. In short, Thompson's objection that 'meaning' has been neglected depends upon ignoring the development of the work from 1975 onwards. I do not believe it can be sustained, unless he specifies more precisely what type or aspect of meaning is being overlooked. The blanket term 'content' is of little help in this respect.

Thompson's second objection is that the emphasis on utterances as constitutive of exchanges "provides no way of handling the internal features of the contributions themselves" (p.107). If Thompson means by this that the Birmingham work did not attend in great detail to the syntactic clause and sentence structure of contributions to the discourse, then he is absolutely correct. But it was hardly necessary that they should, since most of linguistics at the time was devoted to producing highly developed accounts of the "internal features" of the sentence and clause, in ways which paid little or no attention to how they might be

functioning as contributions to a discourse. It would be incumbent upon Thompson to specify what details of the internal features of contributions were being overlooked that might be relevant to an understanding of their role within the discourse. (Sinclair and Coulthard, for instance, did specify interpretive rules which related features of syntactic form - such as declarative, interrogative, and imperative - to discourse function.) Otherwise Thompson's objection is rather like criticising an account of sentence structure for not attending to its segmental phonology.

It may be, however, that by internal features of the contributions themselves, Thompson has in mind lengthy contributions to the discourse involving several sentence-like objects within the one turn. This was clearly recognised as a problem by the Birmingham people:

The earlier work on classroom interaction, broadcast interviews and discussions and committee meetings had highlighted but not solved a major problem - how to analyse long utterances.

(Coulthard and Montgomery, 1981:31)

It was against this background that the work on monologue was undertaken, in part because of the problems that this kind of discourse posed for exchange structure type analysis. On the basis of work on lecture discourse it was proposed that speakers operate reflexively in the production of monologue. One strand of the discourse could be seen as primarily concerned with topical development, but interwoven with this strand was another, the concern of which was with monitoring, reflecting back on and commenting upon the primary thrust of the discourse. (Montgomery, 1977:99). The essential insight was thus that speakers shift their stance within the talk to digress from, or gloss, what they have just been saying by clarification, qualification, comment and so on. In this way they display an interactive dimension to the discourse even within and while holding to an extended turn; for the shifts from one strand of discourse to another (from main to subsidiary discourse, as I



called it) could best be understood in terms of speakers' adjustments designed to take account of hypothetical or actual audience reaction.

Thompson, however, is sceptical of this proposal. He views it as a 'desperate attempt to preserve the key features of the original model' - presumably of exchange structure. He is also sceptical that interactive work is undertaken within monologue or extended turn.

The 'interactive work' within the monologic discourse can be discerned, it is proposed, by differentiating between a main discourse and a subsidiary discourse, so that categories like 'repeat', 'qualify' and 'comment' can be employed. Yet this proposal seems to offer a very partial and problematic solution." (p.106)

This treats the main/subsidiary distinction as if it were arbitrarily developed, not on the basis of the perceived character of the talk, but merely in order to meet the exigencies of a preexisting model. I can only point out that at least two other researchers came quite independently to similar conclusions. Polanyi (1978), having pointed out that "normal turn taking is suspended for the duration of a narrative", comments on the way material concerned with the evaluation of stories is 'embedded' within them:

"Of crucial importance to the reception of the story is the skilful handling of the "evaluation structure"...this structure consists of devices such as repetition, reported speech and thought, build up of suspense... etc. which allows the speaker to indicate the importance of key events or other story materials (p.630)

She then uses an analogy from computer programming to describe the shift from the main story line to embeded "background material" and back again:

A PUSH is a move from the storyline to the embedded material, and a POP is the resumption of the originally interrupted part of story ... So, and well, for example, can indicate that the speaker is PUSHING into a digression, moving from the main line of thought into a subsidiary one, and also can indicate POPPING from the digression back to the main story line. (p.632)

Thus, Polanyi's remarks about the organisation of extended turns involving anecdote prove to be very similar to the proposals concerning lectures - even to the point of distinguishing between 'main' and 'subsidiary' lines

of discourse. Indeed, it seems quite likely that a widespread phenomenon of extended turns is being noted. It is surely the same phenomenon at a rather general level that Goffman (1981) is identifying with the term 'footing'.

A change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance... (P)articipants over the course of their speaking constantly change their footing, these changes being a persistent feature of natural talk." (p.128)

More specifically, one of several kinds of changes in footing observable in lectures is referred to by Goffman as the 'text parenthetical remark', which are, says Goffman,

of great interactional interest. On the one hand they are oriented to the text; on the other, they intimately fit the mood of the occasion and the special interest and identity of the particular audience... Text parenthetical remarks convey qualifying thoughts that the speaker appears to have arrived at just at the very moment. It is as if the speaker here functioned as the broker of his own statements, a mediator between text and audience, a resource capable of picking up on the non-verbally conveyed concerns of the listeners and responding to them in the light of the text and everything else known and experienced by the speaker. (p.177)

Inasmuch as other researchers independently arrived at similar conclusions, I would argue that the distinction between 'main' and 'subsidiary' was a valid attempt to take account of a hitherto unnoted, but interactionally significant, feature of the extended turns. It should not, therefore, be seen as "a desperate attempt to preserve the original model", since other researchers with no commitment to this model came up with remarkably similar observations. The distinction can, I think, offer something to the understanding of the internally differentiated structure of lengthy contributions; and there is no need in consequence to take the problem of such turns to be as large a lacuna in the Birmingham work as Thompson would have us believe.

Thompson's third and most serious objection is that "Sinclair and his associates have very little of interest to say about the non-linguistic



organisation of discursive situations." (p.107) In particular, "they appear to assume that relations of power and control can be fully explicated, and are fully disclosed, within the structure of the discourse." (p.108) It is true that Sinclair and Coulthard point, for example, to the way in which teachers occupy both the initial and final position in three part exchanges and identify this with control of the discourse: "The basic IRF structure, giving the teacher the last word, allows him to recast in his own terms any pupil response." (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975:130) But this in no way amounts to the claim attributed to them by Thompson that "relations of power .. are fully disclosed by the operation of exchange structure." (p.108) It is only to suggest that the unit exchange is one of several discursive dimensions along which power may operate.

Admittedly the notions of 'power', 'domination', 'control' and 'situation' do not emerge in an elaborated and developed fashion in the Birmingham work. They remain for the most part unanalysed. There is a readiness to collapse the notion of 'domination' into the notion of 'control of the discourse', thereby detaching too completely the processes of power and domination from their non-discursive material bases. But Sinclair and Coulthard deserve some credit, I think, for recognising ways in which the conduct of the discourse, and the assymetrical distribution of positions within it, can simultaneously entail the exercise and enactment of power. It should be noted, in this respect, that the way in which Thompson reminds us of the material bases of power involves him in a difficulty, since it leads him at the same time to deny the materiality of discourse. He seems to consider that discourse merely reflects, expresses, or discloses relations of power and domination, these being independently established in some non-discursive realm. According to this view language is relegated to being a "medium of expression of relations of power" (108: my italics), albeit a "very important" one. Language, in consequence,

(and discourse in particular) is denied an active role in the constitution and contestation of power relations.

Clearly, then, the Birmingham work leaves an important task unfinished in failing to clarify the relation between discursive and extra-discursive domains, between the linguistic and the social order, between external constraints imposed by the social order and the internal constraints of the discourse. It should be remembered, however, that sociology itself has clearly pointed up the difficulties attendant upon such a project. Characterising features of "the non-linguistic organisation of discourse situations" (in Thompson's phrase) is unlikely to prove any easier than work on 'social context'. (See my comments in Wells and Montgomery, 1981: pp. 232-235.) It would be unfortunate if notions of power and domination proved susceptible to the same objections levelled at the questionable notions of 'status' and 'role'. Interestingly enough, that variant of sociology (conversation analysis) with most to say about the organisation of talk handles the characterisation of situation with a highly principled caution. It is this approach to which Thompson next turns.

(ii) Conversation Analysis: the second broad approach to language examined by Thompson comprises work by Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson and others. This tradition of work grew out of Garfinkel's ethnomethodological project and may be understood as part of that continuing reaction in the human sciences against positivistic and statistical method. Exponents of the approach study conversation as a rich source of observable material on how members of society achieve orderliness in their everyday interactions with each other. They view conversations as jointly constructed, practical accomplishments, and seek to display from the close analysis of transcribed talk the methods adopted by participants in achieving this orderliness - the conversational structures to which participants attend, the interpretive work which they undertake.



Discourse analysts and conversation analysts are interested in essentially similar phenomena, but often see their respective approaches as distinct, even incompatible. Discourse analysis is interested in verbal interaction as a manifestation of the linguistic order and is concerned to describe and explain it in terms of comprehensive models of utterance exchange. It has tended to concentrate mostly on institutional settings. Conversation analysis is more concerned with verbal interaction as instances of the situated social order. It eschews the practice of setting up general models of analysis and undertakes instead to characterise small scale local features of conversational organisation, e.g. preferred responses to compliments (Pomerantz: 1978).

Thompson's reservations about conversation analysis are variations of his major objection to discourse analysis. He contends that they inadequately attend to the social determinations of conversation and in particular to the ways in which talk is embedded within the social structure. Thompson believes, for example, that the turn taking system for conversation cannot be satisfactorily understood without regard to the fact that participants are embedded in relations of power; and on this latter point the conversation analysts are notably silent.

There are, however, principled reasons for this. Invoking categories such as power and domination to elucidate conversational activity involves making a priori assumptions about the nature of the social order and the role of talk within it; and conversation analysts are reluctant to assume anything in advance about which features of the social order may be relevant for the conduct of specific interaction. This is not to say that power or domination is irrelevant to the understanding of talk, but conversational analysis would require a demonstration THAT such notions were relevant, and HOW such notions were relevant before making them a feature of the analysis. Or to put the point slightly differently:

establishing the relevance of power would be a possible outcome of the analysis - not a position that can be arbitrarily assumed at the outset.

The problems here may be illustrated by reference to Sacks' analyses of one particular 'dirty joke' (Sacks:1974 & 1978), and Thompson's subsequent criticism. Sacks argues that the joke, while recorded and transcribed from a group therapy session involving 16/17 year old boys, is really designed for telling between 12 year old girls. The basis for this claim is that the boy telling the joke introduces it as told to him by his sister the night before, and she is subsequently referred to as 'twelve years old'. There are in addition many other details of the transcript that Sacks refers to in order to develop this claim: in particular the joke's punch line effects a put down of a mother by a daughter. Thompson comments as follows:

(Admittedly) the punch line sets up the daughter as victor, overturning the hierarchy of child-parent relations in a way that only daughters can understand. Be that as it may; the joke admits of another interpretation. A dirty joke, circulating among teenage boys, in which women are presented as objects of pleasure whose capacity to satisfy male desire is enhanced by their incapacity to distinguish between a dinner table and a bed: this is a construction of meaning which reproduces, and serves to sustain, a division and asymmetrical relation of power between the sexes. If Sacks had given more consideration to questions of power and social structure, perhaps he would not have been so naively oblivious to this dimension of his specimen joke. (pp. 117-118)

Thompson's counter-interpretation, however, flies in the face of several particulars of the joke's telling. If the joke really reproduces for male delectation the subordination of women, why do the boys fail to find it amusing? Here is the end of the joke:

Ken: ..Third girl walks up t'her - Why didn' yta say  
anything last night; W' you told me it was always  
impolite t'talk with my mouth full,  
(2.0)

Ken: hh hyok hyok  
(1.0)



Ken: Hyok  
(3.0)

Al: HA-HA-HA-HA

As Sacks points out:

"the first two laughs do not overlap, are separated by a gap; the teller and not a recipient laughs first, and not on completion but after a gap; both teller's first laugh and recipient's subsequent first laugh are mirthless and brief." (Sacks, 1974: 351)

Manifestly, in this context, on this occasion "its recipients don't like it..the joke..goes nowhere." (Sacks, 1978: 268 & 269). Thompson's reading of the joke, therefore, does not appear to be relevant to these (male) recipients on this occasion. Indeed, it is possible to sustain Thompson's reading, only by abstracting the joke from its particular localised context, and relocating it arbitrarily in a different signficatory environment - against the background, for example, of a theory of the social order as patriarchy. The question here is not whether or not 'patriarchy' constitutes an adequate social theory. The question is rather whether or not it provides the most immediate and relevant frame of reference for interpreting the story in its setting.

This is a crucial point, for (unusually in the work of conversation analysts) Sacks' account (1978) does make reference to the social order beyond that which is exhibited in the talk itself. He refers to particular details of the social order as typically inhabited and experienced by young teenage girls; and these turn out to be closely related to his detailed analysis and claims about the joke itself. It is not, therefore, that Sacks ignores or overlooks the social order: he attends to it closely. But the power relations within which he ultimately locates the joke are those of age and generation (parent/child), rather than primarily gender. Sacks arrives at his conclusion - that it is a joke for girls at the expense of their mothers rather than for men at the expense of women - in a less arbitrary fashion than Thompson, because he provides ample

warrant for his reading of the joke in the details of the transcript. Thompson provides little or no warrant at all. (Fn.1)

(iii) Critical linguistics: the notion of ideology does not figure explicitly in the work of either the conversation analysts or the discourse analysts, but it turns out to be clearly foregrounded in the third body of work reviewed by Thompson - the critical linguistics of Fowler, Kress, Hodge and Trew. Whereas conversation analysis and discourse analysis are largely oriented towards language as interaction, the prime (though not exclusive concern) of the critical linguists is with language as representation. An enduring and consistent feature of their work has been the elucidation of how ideological viewpoints may be implicated by syntactic choices within the sentence and clause. Their favoured method is the comparison of alternative accounts of the same event or successive versions of the 'same' document. Syntactic patterns of particular interest to them are TRANSITIVITY (briefly: for any particular clause 'who does what to whom and how?'), VOICE ('active' versus 'passive'), and NOMINALIZATION (the selection of a noun or noun phrase to depict a process that can otherwise be depicted by a verb). A clause, for example, such as

(1) Yorkshire police arrested 100 miners yesterday.

involves four basic syntactic-semantic roles:

a PROCESS (an action or event); 'arrest'  
an AGENT (someone or something who performs the action); 'Yorkshire police'  
an AFFECTED (someone or something on whom the action is performed); '100 miners'  
a CIRCUMSTANCE (details of the manner, time or location of the action); 'yesterday'

These same four basic elements can be combined into a different syntactic pattern, but one whose meaning remains closely equivalent to the first example:

(2) 100 miners were arrested yesterday by Yorkshire police.

The relationship of (1) to (2) is one of ACTIVE VOICE to PASSIVE VOICE,



the difference being fundamentally in the order in which elements are presented. Thus:

ACTIVE: Yorkshire police | arrested | 100 miners | yesterday  
AGENT | PROCESS | AFFECTED | CIRCUMSTANCE

PASSIVE: 100 miners | were arrested | by Yorkshire police | yesterday  
AFFECTED | PROCESS | AGENT | CIRCUMSTANCE

Syntactic patterns of transitivity and voice provide a set of contrasting possibilities for depicting events. The passive, for example, provides possibilities for depicting events without explicit reference to an agent, as in:

100 miners | were arrested | yesterday  
AFFECTED | PROCESS | CIRCUMSTANCE

In a particularly telling example, Trew (1979) demonstrates how, between different newspapers and over successive editions, journalistic accounts of an event in pre-independence Zimbabwe shift through differing syntactic formulations:

ACTIVE: Police shoot 11 dead in Salisbury riot

PASSIVE: Rioting blacks shot dead by police

AGENT DELETION: 13 Africans were killed in Sunday's riots

The overall rhetorical effect of these shifts in syntactic organisation is to displace agency away from the police. Indeed, the cause of the deaths comes to be almost the riots themselves rather than armed policemen.

Thompson's reservations about critical linguistics are twofold. In the first place, he considers that the emphasis on syntactic organisation leads to an unduly restrictive account of meaning: "their preoccupation with problems of syntax seriously limits their ability" to undertake "the critical interpretation of linguistic expressions." (p.125) Thompson quite rightly believes that no account of the syntactic patterns of a text, however comprehensive, will yield an exhaustive account of its 'meaning'. This is undoubtedly true. But one wonders on the other hand what an exhaustive account of the 'meaning' of a text would look like that ignored

syntactic patterning, amounting as they do to a necessary, though not sufficient component of a text's meaning. Fowler and his colleagues deserve some credit, I think, for highlighting quite specific ways in which attention to syntax can be used to support the critical interpretation of linguistic expressions. And indeed Thompson's own programme for the study of ideology turns out to include the 'critical linguistic' approach as a necessary element.

His second objection revolves around the use of the term ideology. Thompson objects that it is neither adequately defined nor clearly enough integrated into a systematic social theory. Admittedly, Fowler and associates do not develop the notion of ideology at any great length; it corresponds broadly to notions of distortion, mystification, and misrecognition, with debts to Orwell, Whorf and Althusser. It works at the level of ideology in general, rather than ideologies in particular, and so appears ungrounded in particular social and historical realities. Thompson concludes, rather harshly, that "this conception of ideology is .. so loose and general that it is virtually useless." (p.126) In this respect Fowler et al seem to have fallen foul of the difficulty of developing ideas in domains to which more than one discipline - each with its particular specialisms - can lay claim.

The several approaches to discourse that Thompson reviews are thus found deficient in the following respects. They

- (a) tend to rest upon unduly limited notions of meaning;
- (b) have weakly developed accounts of the relation between the discursive and non-discursive domains;
- (c) have inadequately defined notions of 'power', 'ideology', and 'domination' and fail to integrate these notions into an overall social theory.



I have indicated ways in which I find these criticisms sometimes less than justified. They do, however, clear the ground for Thompson's own substantive proposals.

### *3.0 THOMPSON'S THEORY OF IDEOLOGY, LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE*

#### *3.1. Conceptualising Ideology*

In the first place, ideology is characterised as an epiphenomenon of power. Abstractly understood, power is presented as the ability to act in pursuit of one's own interests. In its concrete manifestations, however, its scope and limits are always set by socio-structural constraints. When the relations of power established at an institutional level are systematically assymetrical, they amount to domination. Ideology is the mobilization of meaning in defence of this domination.

Ideology sustains relations of domination in one of three ways. It may attempt to legitimate such relations by representing them as inherently right (e.g. the divine right of kings); it may attempt to disguise them by representing them as other than they are (e.g. racism/apartheid as 'separate development'); or it may attempt to reify them to rendering them natural and inevitable (e.g. the 'white man's burden' as stemming from the inherent 'fecklessness of the black races'). These processes of legitimation, dissimulation and reification may, of course, operate simultaneously in a complementary and overlapping fashion. Language plays a crucial role in these ideological processes, because it is "the principal medium of the meaning (signification) which serves to sustain relations of domination." (p.131)

#### *3.2 Studying Ideology in Action*

Because language is so heavily implicated in the operation of ideology, it then becomes possible to study its workings at the discursive level. But Thompson would not wish to reduce the study of ideology purely to

textual analysis. Indeed, he distinguishes between three separate but inevitably related moments or phases of analysis.

The first phase is that of social analysis. This entails situating ideology within its socio-historical milieu, which is conceived in terms of three levels: the immediate social context; the broader institutional context; and the level of social structure which conditions or structurates the others.

The second phase is that of discursive analysis. In Thompson's words: "the forms of discourse which express ideology must be viewed not only as socially and historically situated practices, but also as linguistic constructions which display an articulated structure." (p.136) Here again Thompson makes a threefold distinction.

a. Narratives. The legitimating practices of ideology are for Thompson most evident in the narratives of everyday life. Ideology, "in so far as it seeks to sustain relations of domination by representing them as legitimate, tends to assume a narrative form." (p.136)

b. Rhetoric or Argument. Analysis of argument structure may highlight the dissimulating practices of ideology by tracing the contradictions and inconsistencies, the silences and the gaps, which characterise the texture of ideological discourse.

c. Syntactic Structure. Ideology as reification may be disclosed through the analysis of syntactic patterns such as passivization, agent deletion, and nominalisation, which may be mobilized in ways that render invisible the relation of cause to effect and naturalise the process of social and historical determination.



The third phase of analysis consists of interpretation. Indeed, this provides the crucial final phase towards which social analysis and discursive analysis are leading. It is not immediately clear, however, exactly how the interpretive work of this phase will be undertaken. Thompson's emphasis falls heavily on 'what the discourse is about'. Interpretive explication will disclose this, not by any straightforward, literal reading, but by identifying the implied field of reference as well as the explicit field of reference. In Thompson's words:

The terms of a discourse carry out their ideological role by explicitly referring to one thing and implicitly referring to another, by entangling these multiple referents in a way which serves to sustain relations of domination ... To interpret discourse qua ideology is to construct a meaning which unfolds the referential dimension of discourse, which specifies the multiple referents and shows how their entanglement serves to sustain relations of domination." (p. 138)

#### *4.0 CRITICAL RESPONSES*

Thompson presents his programme for the study of ideology in a preliminary form. It is to be developed further in a forthcoming volume. Even in outline, however, it raises several fundamental questions.

Thompson rightly emphasises the importance of social analysis to an understanding of language as ideology. And in stressing the importance of the social order he makes distinctions within it between social context, institutional context, and social structure. I do not think, however, that Thompson adequately specifies which particular features within these spheres of the social order should be attended to. Nor does he suggest how social analysis would provide for the relevance to the interpretation of discourse of the features it had isolated. In consequence it is not clear what degree of social analysis would be sufficient for the interpretation of the discourse. To invoke 'power' as a limiting criterion would not I think help. Consider the following example:



Teacher: What's so funny? Why are you laughing?

Pupil 1: Miss, he said he'd, when you were bending over just now, that he'd like to stick a dinner fork up your bum.

(laughter)

Teacher: Charming, but tell your friend that if he has ideas like that he ought to have a very long chat with a psychiatrist.

Pupil 1: He has, Miss John, they told him he was a queer.

(laughter)

(Source: Beynon, 1985)

If we stress as a relevant feature of context that this is a female teacher with male pupils, do we then take the sequence to be a form of enactment on the symbolic plane of the subordination of women? Or given that these are eleven year old pupils during their first weeks of secondary education, do alternatively take it to be an instance of resistance to the institutional power of the school? Either account seems plausible, but each defines the direction of power differently. Unless a clearer heuristic is provided for the conduct of social analysis, the danger arises of it proving to be an indefinitely extendible and elastic task.

This raises in concrete form a more fundamental problem of a theoretical nature that Thompson nowhere addresses in detail, viz. the exact nature of the relationship between the social order and the discursive domain. Thompson's overriding tendency is to conceptualise this relationship as one of determination in one direction alone, so that social relations are conceived of as existing prior to, and outside of, the discourse itself, upon which they exert pressures and constraints.

A similar difficulty hovers in the background of Thompson's treatment of the exact nature of the relationship between language and ideology. The terms used to formulate this relationship depict language as a container,

vehicle or instrument for ideology. "Ideology", for instance "operates through language" (p.5) and "is expressed in discourse" (p.198; my italics). By implication, therefore, ideology subsists in some realm independently of language, which serves it primarily as an expressive medium. As to the particular character of this realm - psychological or otherwise - Thompson gives no clear pointers.

It is clear, however, that for Thompson not all language is ideological. Whilst it may serve to express ideology, it is not purely and simply coexistent with it. Thus, "an expression is ideological only insofar as it serves to sustain relations of domination" (198). If, however, not all of language is ideological, it then becomes crucially important to identify those particular occasions upon which (or forms in which) it is. Thompson's solution to this problem is to single out two particular discourse genres (anecdote and argument) and a bundle of syntactic features such as passivisation and agent deletion. There are difficulties here, however: for it is by no means clear that the genres selected DO invariably and inevitably sustain relations of domination. The presentation of an argument or the telling of a story can as easily contest the prevailing power relations as sustain them. (See, for example, the following argument with its embedded narrative: "I-and-I thought Jah gave each an every race their own language so no other than that race can overstan them but it is through we were taken into slavery and now in a Babylon that we speak the white tongue." Letter in 'Voice of Rasta', cited in Sutcliffe: 1982). Moreover, many other discourse genres apart from anecdote and argument may become sites for the operation of assymetrical power relations - job interviews, police interrogations, court room proceedings, and so on. It is difficult, therefore, to know why anecdote and argument have been singled out to the exclusion of other forms of discourse.



Nor is it clear why pre-eminently passivisation and agent deletion should be seen as having ideological implications. By no means every instance of the passive with the agent deleted is concerned with the ideological suppression of agency, otherwise we would be driven to conclude that the Morning Star (Daily Worker) in the following example was attempting to exonerate the police:

SCARGILL INJURED IN WORST CLASHES YET

Miners' leader Arthur Scargill was injured yesterday and over 100 miners arrested in the bloodiest battle yet in the miners' 15-week strike. (Morning Star: 19/6/84)

Ideology as reification is thus not invariably implicated in the selection of passive with agent deleted.

It is noteworthy also that Thompson has focused on forms of discourse of a monologic type: the extended turns of everyday narratives; or the dissimulating "explanations and chains of reasoning" that constitute an "argumentative structure". This emphasis on the extended monologic utterance and the consequent avoidance of discourse genres more heavily predicated upon the interchange of utterances gives his treatment a static and unidirectional character. He avoids instances where ideology or power is overtly negotiated, contested and interrupted. He thereby also avoids discourse genres where the action or illocutionary force of utterances is equally as relevant as his preferred emphasis on their content.

Indeed, the term 'meaning' - though very important to Thompson's argument - is not always very clearly defined. He consistently criticises both critical linguistics and discourses analysis for operating with notions of meaning that are too tightly delimited. But his own programmatic outline for the study of ideology fails to provide any adequate alternative definition. He acknowledges the problem as follows:

"'The meaning of what is said', this cryptic, complex notion which seems everywhere to elude a satisfactory analysis: no claim can be made to offer such an analysis



here. Suffice it to observe that the meaning of an expression is an essentially open, shifting, indeterminate phenomenon, often framed in rhetorical figures and always susceptible to change." (p.132)

But, if meaning is so elusive, then it is difficult to see how anything useful can be said about it at all. Indeed, there are puzzling shifts in the way Thompson invokes the notion of meaning at different points in the book. In his Introduction, he inclines to a speech act view of meaning ("speaking is a way of acting": p.6) - understandably, since it foregrounds the social and contextually grounded character of language. Elsewhere, however, he inclines to a view of meaning as a combination of reference ("that about which one speaks and writes": p.249); and propositional assertion ("what is asserted in..discourse": p.249). As an overall position on meaning this seems in its own way as restrictive and limited as those approaches with which Thompson takes issue. It is also very much a 'realist' and, I think, ultimately a reductive position to adopt: undue emphasis is placed on "meaning" as truth value, thereby neglecting the performative character of utterances. It would have little to say, for example, about 11 5 & 8 below from a doctor patient interview.

1 D: (morning) ((Doctor standing at his desk as patient  
2 enters the room))  
3 P: (morning)  
4 D: how are you? ((patient removes coat))  
5 P: I'm very well thank you doctor  
6 are YOU alright?  
7 D: yes ((Doctor arranging record cards on his desk))  
8 P: that's the main thing if YOU'RE alright  
9 (2.5) ((joint laughter))  
10 D: now (Doctor looks at Patient) (0.5) ((sits down))  
11 just er check up on this (0.5) your erm (1.0)  
12 ((Patient sits down)) breathing thing was (4.0) a  
year  
13 ago?

Considered in terms of propositional content to be inspected for its truth value, the patient's utterance "I'm very well thank you doctor" (1.5) is literally a nonsense: he has a severe breathing problem and a disabling arthritis in one arm. Nonetheless, the utterance is reasonably appropriate in context. He has treated the doctor's query, "how are you?" (1.4), not as a genuine request for information, but as part of a greetings sequence.

The laughter at 1.9 is the outcome of some quite subtle interactive work by the patient. He exploits the potential ambiguity in medical settings of tokens such as "how are you?", by treating his own query to the doctor (1.6) and the doctor's response to it (1.7), as if they WERE genuine - "that's the main thing if YOU'RE alright".

Basically, we can talk sense (and nonsense) in many different ways, and any comprehensive account of meaning must ultimately address a range of semantic and structural phenomena: sense as well as reference; illocutionary force as well as propositional content; discourse structure as well as clause structure. despite the general balance and rigour of Thompson's expositions, he has a tendency when considering meaning either to leave the notion ill-defined, or to make one dimension stand for the whole.

The prominence given to "content" and "reference" in Thompson's account is partly predetermined by the way which the notion of language is articulated into relationship with the notions of ideology and power. For the link between language and ideology is made more direct and immediate than the link between language and power. Ideology draws directly on language for the meanings which it mobilises in the defence of domination by justifying or naturalising the power relations that are already in play. This mode of articulating the concepts has the advantage of binding "the analysis of ideology to the question of critique" (p.4): but it also leads, I think, to an account which lacks any strong sense of language (discourse) as independently constitutive of power relations as well as of ideology. There is little or no recognition of the manifold ways in which language can itself be a form of power - that the conduct of discourse can constitute social relations in assymetrical ways, preparing dominant and subordinate positions for us to speak from.



Established work in linguistics (see, for example, Halliday: 1978, Van Dijk: 1977) would seem to suggest that the major modes of signification (for example, 'propositional content' v. 'illocutionary force'; 'ideational meanings' v. 'interpersonal meanings') can be understood in terms of a distinction between social-reality constructing systems on the one hand and social-relation constituting systems on the other. Both modes of signification are typically present at one and the same time in any utterance; the process of constructing or reproducing a reality typically implies a particular recipient or audience, and vice versa. Elsewhere (see Chapter 2, below) I have argued that the operation of ideology and of power may be seen in terms of this two fold distinction in signification, so that ideological processes are seen as drawing upon the reality-constructing systems, and power relations are seen as in part constituted by the social-relational systems. One merit of articulating the relationships in this way is that it captures a sense of the way in which power may operate on occasion quite without the dissimulating cloak of ideology and yet still take discursive form.

#### *5.0 CONCLUSION*

These reflections, though critical, are in no way intended to invalidate Thompson's overall project, which is more than ever important at the present time. He is owed a significant debt for presenting such lucid and thoughtful accounts of a wide range of different work on ideology and on language, and for accomplishing this within the framework of a searching yet coherent argument. The book is both scholarly and committed, engaging with the issues in a consistently intelligent, sometimes provocative, fashion. Although it is presented as only the prologomenon to a fuller theory, it will do much to stimulate and clarify work in this area. I look forward to his planned volume on the interpretation of ideology with great interest.



Footnote 1: Thompson might have been on surer ground here if he had allowed for the possibility of teenage girls in peer groups occasionally telling 'sexist' jokes - reproducing in their humour aspects of a patriarchal order that stands against their real interests.

REVIEW OF:

DIANE MACDONELL (1986) *THEORIES OF DISCOURSE: AN INTRODUCTION*

OXFORD: BLACKWELL

&

SPERBER, D. & WILSON, D. (1986)

RELEVANCE: COMMUNICATION AND COGNITION

OXFORD: BLACKWELL

*Theories of Discourse* "aims to provide methods, concepts and an orientation to encourage the investigation of all discourses" (p.4). It does so by introducing the work of Althusser, Pecheux, and Foucault, engaging critically with them, and weaving their distinctive contributions into an overall argument about discourse. In this way, much of the book is devoted to situating the study of discourse, rather than to its close, analytic study: it is more an argument about why and from what viewpoint should discourse be studied than an exposition of how to do it.

Macdonell relies upon Althusser to provide the fundamental theoretical framework for the study of discourse, which he does for her in three particular ways. First of all he provides a theory of ideology which locates its operation in particular institutional domains - the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA's) of family, law, media, education. Secondly, he provides a theory of its working in these domains in terms of the concept of 'interpellation', whereby ideology calls individuals into place and confers upon them their identity. Thirdly he offers a radical materialism in contrast to the workings of philosophical humanism. Because the subject is called into place by ideology, the individual is no longer seen as the source or origin of meaning. Indeed, a sense of

individuality, of individual responsibility for our own actions, is probably in itself an elementary ideological effect (p.37). For Althusser, then, meaning does not issue from the human being, is not made by individuals, but is pre-constituted in discourses, which are transindividual in their origins.

Although Althusser defines a terrain on which ideology may operate (the ISA's), and a mechanism through which it may operate ('interpellation'), his account is considered deficient by Macdonell for failing to maintain its distance from that very philosophical idealism which it generally repudiates. At times, therefore, it seems as if a single overarching general mechanism is being invoked to explain the operation of ideology, which in consequence seems to operate in a one-directional and deterministic fashion. It is this tendency on the part of Althusser to invoke highly general mechanisms that leads Macdonell to remark that, while "countering humanist assumptions, [he] remains too reliant upon them." (p.41)

Pêcheux provides a remedy for some of the problems in Althusser's account, by emphasising the antagonistic nature of the relationship between discourses. Words change their meaning from one discourse to another; and conflicting discourses develop, even where there is supposed to be a common language (p.45). Indeed, it is through the discourses in which words are used that words take up positions in struggle, so that the struggle of discourses changes their meanings (p.51).

For Macdonell, Pêcheux's work extends that of Althusser, because of its emphasis on a multiplicity of discourses, all subsisting in an uneasy relationship with each other. This emphasis provides a useful corrective to any misleading notions of a single or unitary dominant discourse that always and inevitably interpellates individuals into place as ideological



subjects. Instead, Pêcheux allows for more dynamic processes both of counter-identification and disidentification. In the former process, the subject rejects the terms of a dominant discourse by reversing them, even if the simple act of reversal may leave the subject nonetheless complicit with them. In the latter process the terms of the dominant discourse undergo a more thoroughgoing displacement and transformation. Both concepts, then, provide a counterweight to some of the deterministic tendencies latent in Althusser. What remains unresolved, however, is the source of the conflictual relationships between contending discourses.

It could be argued that rival meanings are principally the product of the class struggle, as in Vološinov/Bakhtin's work, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Macdonell avoids the possible reductivism of this approach by invoking instead the work of Foucault, whom she uses to argue a more general, but nonetheless close, relation between forms of material practice and forms of discourse. In this view, the emergence of particular discourses, and changes within them, is closely linked to the development and practice of particular institutions. Thus, the rise of psychiatry - for example - is not seen simply as an effect of new knowledge but is prefigured in the emergence of new forms of confinement: the emergence of asylums gave the shape in which psychiatry was to appear (p.90).

Macdonell's engagement with Foucault is not a comfortable one. She clearly finds much to take issue with. In particular she takes exception to Foucault's claim that 'power is "always already there"' on its own terms.

She comments:

In other words, what prevails is all there is: power is made up only of an 'inside'. For actual studies, this line requires 'a non-economic analysis of power'... Now, the crucial difficulty with with these arguments is that they leave resistance in a blind alley ... the argument will not let us study revolutions and radical change. (p.122)

Nonetheless, the engagement with Foucault provides Macdonell with the

third crucial term for her own argument - namely 'history'. Unless the study of ideology and discourse proceeds in an historically grounded fashion, it runs the risk of losing all explanatory and much critical power. For only by relocating discourses in material practices is it possible to explain their emergence and disclose fully their operation. And without attention to specific institutions and historically contingent modes of practice we are in danger of universalising and overgeneralising. Despite Macdonell's reservations about Foucault, he does provide this close attention to the institutional grounds of discourse, handled within and informed historical perspective.

As the title of the book suggests, notions of discourse provide a common strand for weaving together the separate discussions of Althusser, Pêcheux and Foucault. It is not always clear, however, why, having begun with ideology, discourse should be so crucial to the argument. For example, Macdonell invokes Pêcheux's notions of counter-identification and disidentification as a useful supplement and corrective to Althusser's account of interpellation. It would be possible, however, to develop these notions purely as ideological operations, without necessarily having recourse to notions of discourse. Gramsci, for instance, recognises that total hegemony is rarely achieved and that there are always emergent forms of consciousness and representation that may be mobilised in opposition to the hegemonic order, leading to a constant struggle between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forms. Since accounts of ideology often proceed along such lines with little or no reference to language or discourse, I would have expected a little more justification of its centrality here.

Macdonell assumes, in effect, a close connection between discourse and ideology, without making explicit precisely how or why the two terms should be articulated. It is clearly possible to bring the two terms



together around the notion of meaning: on the one hand, "ideologies are systems of meanings that install everybody in imaginary relations to the real relations in which they live" (p.27); on the other hand possibilities for meaning are marked out through 'a system of relationships of substitution, paraphrases, synonymies, etc., which operate between linguistic elements - "signifiers" - in a given discursive formation' (Pecheux 1975, trans. 1982, p.112) (Macdonell: 12). This, however, involves Macdonell in strong claims about the production of meaning. In the first place, meaning is contextually determined: "meanings are to be found only in the concrete forms of differing social and institutional practices" (p.12). Secondly, meaning arises out of conflict and antagonisms between one discourse and another: "the positions, by reference to which words in discourse acquire meanings, are in the end antagonistic. They are effects of antagonisms traversing discourse through ideological apparatuses but rooted outside them....In this way, meanings are gained or lost through struggles in which what is at stake is ultimately quite a lot more than either words or discourses." (p.51)

Both of these claims involve certain major difficulties. While certain kinds of meaning may well be contextually determined (indeed there are well established traditions of work and branches of study within linguistics that have argued this claim in much detail: see Firth, 1957; Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983; among others), I think it is mistaken to suggest that meaning is reducible to concrete social and institutional practice. Such a suggestion implies that social and institutional practices are independently constituted outside language. On the contrary, whatever the role of context, language as system is itself partly constitutive of meaning and constitutive in turn of the practices we call social - it both shapes and is shaped by them. In other words, language (including the different types of meaning variously imbricated within it) far from being reducible to social and institutional practice, is



itself an institution in its own right. While some meanings may well be specific to concrete material practices and institutions, other meanings are more generalised and help define the characteristics of language as an institution. Basic grammatical meanings such as the present tense or use of the copula are of this type.

Accordingly, I cannot see meaning purely as an effect of struggle, again because this implies that social formations, institutions, and particular social practices are articulated in their antagonistic relations prior to and outside of language. Furthermore, while some meanings clearly become the site of struggle (e.g. such terms as 'freedom', 'democracy', 'accountability', 'public ownership'), such struggles always proceed against a background of meanings that are already in place, crystallised, sedimented and taken for granted. It does not seem to me intuitively plausible that meanings of all types can all be the focus of struggle all at the same time. If such were to be the case there would be little or no possibility for organised and concerted action, revolutionary or otherwise. The fundamental difficulty underlying this argument is with the term 'meaning' itself, which is used by Macdonell in an undifferentiated way. Even though she occasionally refers to the meaning of expressions and propositions, all of her illustrative discussion of meaning (pp. 24-27; pp. 48-51) is devoted to word meaning. This ignores whole realms of meaning which are central to social practice around language. It overlooks grammatical meanings (for example, that /-s/, /-z/, or /-iz/ in certain environments means 'more than one'); it overlooks meaning relations around propositions (e.g. 'Reagan abandons his neutral position on election campaign' entails the proposition 'Reagan occupied a neutral position on the election campaign'); it overlooks pragmatic meanings where the referent depends upon context (e.g. the precise referent of the pronoun 'I' will depend upon who is speaking at the moment of utterance); it overlooks performative meanings such as apologising, promising,

questioning, accusing.

These are more than merely fine analytic distinctions. It seems unlikely to be the case that all meanings are implicated in the same way in the ideological process. For example, overt ideological work may well be performed in an explicitly coded fashion by surface vocabulary in phrases such as 'the property-owning democracy'. But less visible ideological work may also be going on around the edges of coded propositions as more or less implicit entailments. When a Ministry of Defence pamphlet urges that "...Britain must do everything in its power ... to deter Russia from further aggression."

it asserts the need for deterrence at the same time as it implies acts of aggression by Russia. It does so by virtue of an entailed proposition in which Russia commits acts of aggression ["to deter Russia from further aggression" → 'Russia has committed acts of aggression'], though what these acts might consist of remains unexplicated throughout the pamphlet. Ultimately, if meaning is crucial to the analysis and understanding of ideology, then we need an adequately theorised account of what it is and how it works: an impoverished account of meaning will lead to an impoverished account of ideology.

Sperber & Wilson's book, *Relevance*, is a highly sophisticated approach to meaning from within the anglo-american tradition of work on linguistic pragmatics and thus derives its inspiration from very different sources from those drawn upon by Macdonell. Indeed, it is unlikely to be read sympathetically by those working within a European tradition of discourse studies, even though its central focus - on the interrelationships of meaning and context - is clearly of very general interest. Their book exhibits both the virtues and vices of the more philosophically based work in linguistic pragmatics. It develops its arguments by analysing and



discussing constructed, idealised examples, rather than by drawing upon actually occurring instances of talk. It treats communication principally in cognitive terms by proposing a general model of the mental processes involved in understanding an utterance. Its emphasis, therefore, is intrasubjective - on the steps adopted by an individual in making sense of an utterance - rather than intersubjective and interactional.

Despite these presuppositions, it seems to me that some very interesting arguments are being developed in *Relevance*. For one thing, Sperber and Wilson develop a critique of a common view of communication which sees it as dependent upon a shared code. Their principle target here is semiotics, though neither structuralism as a whole nor linguistic models such as transformational-generative grammar would escape their strictures. Basically, code models of communication are seen as inevitably deficient because of problems such as reference assignment, which code models have no way of handling. A code model of communication, for instance, when faced with an utterance such as:

I'll come tomorrow

is only able to determine its meaning as far as interpreting 'I' as 'the speaker', and 'tomorrow' as 'the next day after the day of the utterance'. The code model itself cannot specify who actually is the speaker and which specific day (Friday, 14th October?) is tomorrow: it cannot specify the precise referent for such items on any particular occasion of their use, since this depends upon potentially unique features of context. Indeed many aspects of interpretation, in addition to reference assignment, depend upon features of context, including everyday, oblique uses of language such as irony or metaphor. Consequently, it is not possible routinely to make sense of an utterance merely by applying the rules of grammar and knowledge of vocabulary. On the contrary, making sense of an utterance requires the use of inferencing procedures to relate its linguistic structure to the likely assumptions that it was



intended to activate. Inferencing, for Sperber & Wilson, is crucially informed by a single overarching principle - the principle of relevance - upon which interpreters rely in order to select the likeliest assumption intended by the utterance. Every case of communication requiring the use of inferencing carries a guarantee of optimal relevance, which in operational terms means that the most relevant assumption will be the one producing the most contextual effects in return for the least processing effort.

The full scope of the theory and the detailed descriptions of inferencing are beyond the scope of this review. But the radical implications of Sperber & Wilson's work may be summed up as follows. Meaning is no longer seen as a property immanent within the text, utterance or message. Their account assumes a crucial role for context and assumes an utterance will mean different things to people depending upon the contextual assumptions which they rely upon in the act of interpretation. Consequently, making sense of an utterance is not seen as a normative procedure leading to a right or correct interpretation. Oblique uses of language -such as metaphor and irony - do not have to be bracketed within their approach as somehow deviant or aberrant uses of the code, and as therefore outside the scope of study of normal communication, to be relegated instead to the spheres of poetics or rhetoric. Instead, nothing in principle distinguishes such cases from everyday instances of utterances where meanings are implied, and left implicit. Indeed, Sperber and Wilson assume much communication to be of this kind.

Whilst many of these positions have been current in linguistic pragmatics for some time, they have been selectively applied to certain aspects of utterance interpretation (such as deixis or illocutionary force) and not argued I think until now as inevitable and central to the whole act of interpretation.

Their account still poses problems in the way it assumes a set of basic cognitive mechanisms which are somewhat arbitrarily asserted to be psychologically plausible. (How does one demonstrate psychological plausibility?). Indeed, Sperber and Wilson interiorise the whole process of interpretation; and, although they provide many hypothetical interpretations of illustrative examples, quite persuasively demonstrating the determination of interpretation by contextual assumption, they do not - I think - provide a procedure which accounts for how a particular, given interpretation was executed on a particular, given utterance in a particular, given context. This makes it difficult to see how certain types of interpretive practice may be more common within some social formations rather than others. In this sense the book seems to lack the close, empirical demonstrations of, for example, some conversation analysis or ethnography.

It will doubtless, however, become both a landmark and a signpost for work in pragmatics. It could also make important contributions to debates in those subject areas, such as Literary Criticism or Media Studies, where interpretation is an important aspect of the field of inquiry. In Media Studies, for example, there was an unfortunate tendency to use structuralism, or more particularly semiotics, in a normative (and sometimes pedagogically authoritarian) manner to furnish definitive readings of an advert or programme. The embarrassment of alternative readings was resolved by appeal to the notion of 'preferred reading' (for the right one) or 'aberrant decoding' (for the wrong one). In the short term, such difficulties have probably undermined, or interrupted, potentially valuable work on media text. Macdonell's book, however, ably argues the case for a continued concern with "the systems of meanings that install everyone in imaginary relations to the real relations in which they live." Central to this task, of course, is a proper understanding of meaning and interpretation: and it is precisely in these

crucial areas that Sperber and Wilson's book has such an important contribution to make.



REVIEW OF  
WORKING PAPERS IN DISCOURSE AND CONVERSATIONAL ANALYSIS  
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EDITED BY

TONY HAK, JOKE HAAFKENS, & GERHARD NIJHOF

In a closely argued study of the relationship of language and ideology published some two years ago the author asserted that:

The discourse analysts have tended to emphasize form and structure at the expense of content...they...have tended to neglect the question of what is said in discourse, that is, the question of meaning and of the interpretation of meaning...[They have a] tendency to displace content by structure.

(J.B. Thompson: Studies in the Theory of Ideology)

This would be a difficult charge to level at the recent issue of *Konteksten*, since the emphasis throughout this volume falls much more on content rather than on form or structure. At the centre of the volume lies a range of empirical papers and many of these are predicated upon close analysis of the meaning of key expressions in discourse data.

The fruits of this approach may be seen clearly in a paper such as that of Nijhof's on the textual construction of pregnancy. On the basis of a close discourse analysis of the transcript of an interview he argues that the term *pregnancy* "acquires the meaning of...'natural process', of 'something women have always been brought up to do, of something 'normal'. At first sight this may seem a not unremarkable interpretive gloss on the transcript. But the method adopted to achieve such a gloss is rigorously formal, relying here and elsewhere in the volume on Zellig Harris's distributional model of the analysis of discourse. This depends upon identifying those segments of a discourse which occur in identical environments and which occupy similar grammatical positions within a sentence. Segments isolated in this way are considered formally

equivalent, and it is by tracing these equivalences through the discourse that an interpretive gloss such as that given above is achieved.

There are other intellectual debts evident in the volume that support this interest in interpretation. From Volosinov is drawn an awareness of the multi-accentual nature of the sign, so that in Nijhof's paper, mentioned above, the term *pregnancy* emerges on further analysis as the site of struggle between contending definitions. It variously operates as a term for a normal, natural condition; as a term for a medical condition; and finally, in a more complex reading, as one in which 'naturalness' has been relegated to a mythic past prior to the advent of modern medical procedures of ante-natal care.

Similarly, in a study by Haafkens and van Haaster of documentation surrounding the planning of a mental health scheme, competing definitions of 'problems' and 'assistance' emerge out of close analysis. The mental health scheme was potentially innovative in character and was being planned on an experimental basis for two relatively disadvantaged areas of Rotterdam. Those planning the scheme liaised with staff of the Municipal Mental Health Service, and in the exchange of correspondence between the two groups key expressions are found to be inflected in subtly contrasting ways. In the texts produced by the planning group "*problems* were interpreted in relation to the environment people live in. *Assistance* was related to the possibilities for facilities within the neighbourhood." On the other hand, in the texts written by the Municipal Mental Health Service "the *problems* were interpreted in terms of the time span within which they were to be dealt with." Indeed, in the latter case "the problems as well as the assistance were both formulated in terms of a theoretical framework that is connected with the *organisational possibilities* of the Municipal Mental Health Service." (p 73)



In each case, therefore, discourse is seen as a domain where equivalences are established but these equivalences may also diverge so that expressions may be redefined in potentially antagonistic ways. And it is not merely expressions within a discourse that may become set in conflict with each other. For another informing spirit behind the volume is the work of the French discourse theorist, Pecheux. From his work is drawn a sense of the multiplicity of discourses within a single text, even at the level of a sentence. This approach may be seen at work informally in Torode's re-evaluation of the ethnographic data in Paul Willis's study (1977) of how working class school-leavers get working class jobs. Torode points to the way in which *Learning to Labour* attributes a single, male, working class discourse to the "lads", and contends quite convincingly that this discourse is not undifferentiated. In fact, he isolates two contrasting discourses in the interview data cited by Willis. According to Torode:

It is clear that Joey and Spansky express divergent orientations, whilst both being members of Willis's "lads"...The distinctions between past, present and future which figure so repetitiously in the discourse of Spansky and his father do not arise at all in the discourse of Joey or his parents." (p. 176)

In Torode's assessment, then, the interview data in *Learning to Labour* admits of a more subtle interpretation than Willis draws from it.

The precise way in which Pecheux's work can open up texts to this kind of subtle re-reading is given more extended treatment in the opening papers of the volume ("Discourse Analysis between Harris and Pecheux", by Brian Torode; and "Why Voloshinov needs Formal Method", by Tony Hak). In these papers the interplay between discourses in a text is revealed by application of central distinctions drawn from Pecheux, perhaps most notably the distinction between the preconstructed and the enunciated in discourse:

Enunciation is ongoing in time, and thus refers to the 'work' done by the spoken utterance or written passage in question. Preconstruction refers to the taken-for-granted



context against which the speaking or writing occurs. (p. 14)

The distinction, therefore, highlights the way in which elements from one discourse may irrupt into another discourse in virtually a pre-coded fashion. Examples such as the following are used at various points in the volume simultaneously to illustrate the distinction between the enunciated and the preconstructed in discourse as well as to discuss the interplay between potentially rival discourses within a text:

(1) Casals, who is exiled from Spain, stopped performing after the fascist victory.

(2) He who discovered the elliptical order of the planets died in misery.

(3) He who saved the world by dying on the cross does not exist.

As discussed in Konteksten, the clauses in bold type are treated as instances of preconstructed discourse, incorporating elements from one discourse domain into another. It is suggested, for instance, that example (1) intermingles the discourses of politics and music; example (2) blends together the discourse of scientific history with that of personal biography; and example (3) sets the discourse of atheism in conflict with that of Christianity. It is not clear to me, however, that all the examples are of the same type. The relative clause of example (1) is subtly different in character to those of (2) and (3). In grammatical terms those of (2) & (3) are defining relative clauses, whereas the clause in (1) is nondefining. Basically, in (1) the focus of the sentence is defined by the proper name 'Casals', and the subsequent relative clause adds information about his present status; in (2) and (3), however, the relative clauses actually serve to define the respective referents of the pronoun 'he'. Pecheux, himself, tends to link the operation of the preconstructed primarily with defining rather than non-defining relative clauses. Not only, however, does a problem arise over the uniformity of the examples in question. Even if the clause boundaries in the examples proved a reliable indication of the boundaries of one kind of discourse with

another, there still remains the problem of identifying the discourses in question. It is not clear to me on what grounds the discourse of personal biography, scientific history, atheism, Christianity, etc. are identified as such, except on the basis of a rather academically refined (and completely unexplicated) form of 'common sense'. It is quite possible to suggest other discourses for the examples in question: "He died in misery" could be attributed to the discourse of the 'folk-tale', 'novel', 'letter', or 'anecdote' as easily as to the discourse of personal biography. It is at this point, therefore, that the close formalism of the distributional discourse analysis gives way to broader theoretical concerns.

There are, however, some problems in articulating the close empirical analyses with larger theoretical issues, even while it remains one of the strengths of this volume that the latter are never overlooked or forgotten. Although all the papers are predicated upon specific problems in the analysis of discourse, the close attention to language is always in the service of sociological concerns. This is invigorating insofar as the study of language is placed at the centre of the study of social life. But there is also a paradox here, inasmuch as the theoretical position most often adopted tends towards reducing all social practice to the discourse in which it is constituted. Nijhof provides a representative formulation:

Sociology is a science of the social. The social is the whole of meanings. Meaning can be studied as the effect of relations of signs, particularly of language signs. Relations of language signs are defined as text. In this respect sociology is textsociology. According to this textsociology, social reality is produced in linguistic practice. (p. 77)

The emphasis on linguistic practice and the study of discourse stems from a desire to avoid two contrasting kinds of difficulty in sociological analysis - 'objectivism', which lays undue stress on the determining role of social structure; and 'subjectivism', which attributes too much to the role of individual agency and personal significance. In this respect the

study of discourse provides a way of mediating between these two contrasting alternatives - of dealing simultaneously with institutional structure and personal significance. It is possible, however, for such an approach to remain locked within a world of words that nowhere point beyond themselves. This may be a useful corrective to forms of naive empiricism. But if meaning is purely an "effect of the relation of signs" then it is difficult to explain how meanings come into conflict or why they should change. While this volume represents clear advances in the analysis of the content of discourse, it still leaves us with questions to answer about the way in which the realm of discourse connects with the gritty contingencies of extra-discursive reality.



*PART TWO*

TEXT, FORM AND MEANING:

LANGUAGE AS CODE AND AS IDEOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION TO PART TWO

Despite the centrality of 'meaning' to discussions in Thompson (1984) and Macdonell (1986), both writers display a certain reluctance to engage with the concept in a detailed and explicit fashion. If, however, 'meaning' is to play a central role in cultural and social analysis, then it would seem important to address it more directly. Their diffidence in the face of the term is perhaps understandable given the reluctance even within linguistics to engage with problems of meaning before the late 1960's. Since then, however, there has been a burgeoning of interest, to such an extent that there is now an embarrassing diversity of theoretical and analytical positions on offer.

In Chapter Three I adopt a simplified Hallidayan approach to types of meaning and distinguish basically between representational meanings and relational meanings (or, in his terms, between ideational meanings and interpersonal meanings). Ideational or representational meanings are those associated for Halliday with the observer function of language - with language used to encode entities, processes and events in the world, and the connections between them: it is language used to map and actively construct reality. Interpersonal or relational meanings, on the other hand, are those associated with the intruder function of language - with language in its dialogic aspect as a constitutive component of social encounters, deeply implicated in the simplest interchange. For all the diversity of approaches to meaning within linguistics the basic outline of this distinction is not particularly controversial, although there is variation over the precise terms in which it is developed.

In a Hallidayan approach the importance of the distinction lies in the way the terms mediate between textual form on the one hand and the wider social structure (or 'semiotic') on the other. For the meaning components are held to have reflexes in the grammar and vocabulary of a language:

the system of transitivity, for example, is considered to be crucial to the encoding of ideational meanings; and the system of mood, for example, is considered to be crucial to the expression of interpersonal meanings. But they also point outwards to the context of culture. In the account given below I relate the reality constructing systems to ideology and the interpersonal systems to power.

The advantage of posing the distinction in this way lies in the emphasis it accords to language as a form of activity as well as a form of reflection or representation. But some problems do arise. In studies of ideology the interest falls often exclusively on matters of representation. Although the ideational/interpersonal distinction provides a useful corrective to this somewhat one-dimensional view of meaning, it does raise the issue of how to handle those systems of meaning that are not engaged primarily in representation. Merely to relate them to power seems in retrospect something of a conceptual short-cut. What I had in mind was the way roles and relationships in an encounter are constituted in terms of linguistic choices within interpersonal components; and these can be viewed independently, as it were, of what the discourse 'is about'. At the time it seemed relatively straightforward to handle interpersonal choices in terms of power and dominance. And there was some precedent for this in Fowler et al (1978) *Language and Control*. And, while I think it is fair to argue that there are ways in which discourse operates in the exercise of power sometimes without much reference to supporting systems of ideology, I think there was a danger in forcing the terms apart. There are, in effect, various kinds of linkage between power and ideology which the distinction tended to disguise - for instance, that meanings become ideological precisely at the moment in which they become a stake in a struggle over power and domination. And Fairclough's later work (1985, 1989) on critical discourse analysis does much to show ways



in which ideological meanings may be present as background knowledge in the conduct of encounters.

Nonetheless, the framework provided a useful way in to the texts discussed in Chapter Two. Indeed, it helped to point the way towards towards dimensions of text that can escape analyses that take ideology as their starting point. It is a temptation, for example, when beginning from ideology, to focus on news and current affairs within the media to the exclusion of other kinds of discourse. But attempting to take account of interpersonal or relational meanings led to the interest in other genres, and - more particularly - to the interest in the notion of 'direct address', which first surfaces in Chapter Two but which receives more extended treatment in Chapters Six and Seven.

Even so, the burden of interest in Chapters Two and Three falls more heavily on issues of 'representation' and the ways in which particular habits of coding, whether lexical or lexico-grammatical, implicate particular ideologies. To that extent, the emphasis is more particularly on linguistic form itself and its relation to meaning. In Chapter Two the approach is worked through on sample texts. Indeed, this chapter owes the greatest debts to semiotics and structuralism. The analysis of the page from the Sunday Express is clearly influenced by Levi-Strauss (1963) and Greimas (1966). But I was particularly concerned with exploring ways of validating this type of semiotic analysis by close attention to linguistic form, hence the attention to vocabulary in the Sunday Express when setting up the oppositions that ultimately comprise the four part homology. Otherwise, I felt, there was a risk of such accounts becoming merely displays of interpretive ingenuity. In retrospect, of course, this faith in the text as the final arbiter of meaning comes to seem naively optimistic, except to say that - like any true structuralist - I think the emphasis was more on how the structures of the text produce meanings,

rather than upon what exactly was the unitary meaning of the text. There is, in any case, a certain sleight of hand in the invocation of homologies in this account. They were presented as of the text, recoverable from the text, and as somehow underlying it. If they underlie the text, however, they cannot truly be seen in themselves as aspects of linguistic form. Instead they are much closer to what get treated in Part Three as 'ideologies' and 'scripts', for which no claim to formal linguistic status is made.

Chapter Three is less focussed on specific texts; but, in its pseudo-Whorfian approach, its attention is still primarily on linguistic form - again vocabulary, but also transitivity in its discussion of the newspaper coverage of the 1984/5 miners' strike. Even in the light of post-structuralist developments on the one hand, and developments in linguistic pragmatics on the other, I would still want to stress the role of textual factors in the determination of meaning. In an interesting study Homan (1989) presented two video clips based on a news item to groups of students under different conditions involving controlled alterations to the verbal structure of the accompanying sound track. In each case the basic propositional content was kept as similar as possible - alterations taking place mainly along the parameters of thematisation within the clause and the use of the passive rather than the active. Significant differences between the groups were found in their assignment of causality and personal responsibility to actors within the news event - differences under experimental conditions which are difficult to trace to any other cause than the verbal structure of the sound track. This would, therefore, seem to confirm that the linguistic form of a text has determinate effects on the interpretations that derive from it. Nonetheless, I would recognise more clearly now than I did when writing the chapters that make up Part Two that other factors besides linguistic

form enter into the process of interpretation; and these come more properly into focus in Part Three.



**CHAPTER TWO**

**TEXT AS REPRESENTATION & TEXT AS RELATIONSHIP**

From:

'Representations and Relations:

Ideology and Power in Press and TV News'.

In:

Van Dijk (ed) (1985)

*Discourse and Communication: New Approaches to the Study of Mass Media*

*Discourse and Communication*

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines a range of examples from print journalism, adopting the procedures of close textual analysis. In doing so, it displays a substantial debt to the structuralist and semiotic enterprises; but it also attempts to go beyond these traditions in two main ways. First, it draws on relatively recent work in linguistics to sharpen and clarify our sense of the way in which meanings are produced in text. Second, it attempts to show how specific textual features may be understood to invoke 'extra-textual' cultural relations of ideology and power. In particular, we argue that media journalism often operates with a *Manichean* view of the world: events are constructed in terms of *binary oppositions*, a primary opposition being between 'US' and 'THEM', 'HOME' and 'FOREIGN'.

## 2.0 TWO MODES OF SIGNIFICATION: THE REPRESENTATIONAL AND THE RELATIONAL.

The production of meaning in the media is not a purely linguistic matter - for one thing, a substantial component of the signification is not strictly verbal. Nonetheless, linguistic processes are heavily implicated in even the most visual media, like television. Accordingly, it would seem useful to draw on a distinction current in linguistics between the way utterance (or text) renders the world of objects, persons, events and processes on the one hand, and the way in which that same utterance sets itself into relation with a recipient (reader, viewer or hearer) on the other. Utterance not only 'constructs reality' in a determinate and selective way; it also organizes the relationship between speaker and hearer along specific lines. The distinction is put in various ways in linguistics: 'ideational' v. 'interpersonal'<sup>2</sup>, 'propositional content' v. pragmatic orientation'<sup>3</sup>, 'constative' v. 'performative'<sup>4</sup>. However, because these available terms refer exclusively

to verbal language I would like to introduce a further pair to capture the distinction between two modes of signification, designating them as representational and relational respectively. In the context of this chapter, these terms are applied broadly, not just to speech-based utterance or text, but to semiotic activity generally. As in the case of verbal utterance, both modes of semiosis are typically present at one and the same time in any act of signification - the process of constructing and representing 'a reality' is one that simultaneously implies relations with 'a recipient' of a particular type.

### **3.0 CULTURE, SIGNIFICATION, AND TEXT.**

The distinction allows us to mediate between two separate moments of analysis - the cultural and the textual.

On the one hand we have the sphere of the 'cultural', where relations of *power* - of dominance and subordination - are established, maintained and contested around fundamental social divisions such as gender, age, class, ethnicity; and this by means of the production and circulation of specific *ideologies*. On the other hand, we have the sphere of the 'textual'. Texts signify by virtue of the way in which they articulate together signs selected from an array of signifying systems. Following Halliday (1978), I argue that some of the available systems are more oriented towards the representational, others to the relational. For example, in subsequent sections we discuss some of the vocabulary selected in particular texts as a way of considering their mode of *representation*. And features such as deixis and mode of address, are discussed in order to explore the *relational* dimension. The distinction, therefore, between representational and relational modes points our analysis in two directions - towards specific features of the text on the one hand, and towards wider cultural processes on the other, these we may schematize as follows: (Figure 1).



CULTURE	SIGNIFICATION	TEXTUAL REALIZATION
IDEOLOGY	REPRESENTATIONAL	selections in vocabulary, transitivity etc.
POWER	RELATIONAL	selection in deixis, mood, modality, etc.

Fig. 1: A schematic representation of the two basic modes of language and discourse.

#### 4.0 THE REPRESENTATIONAL AND RELATIONAL ILLUSTRATED: FOUR TEXTS ON POVERTY

In order to illustrate some aspects of the distinction I would like to comment on four journalistic accounts of the conditions of the poor, published between 1860 and 1931. Extracts from the four accounts are reproduced as Appendix 1 at the end of this chapter.

##### 4.1 Representations

The accounts from which the extracts are drawn have one curious feature in common, irrespective of whether or not they attack the conditions under which the poor live. They quite typically draw on a polyglot eschatological religious vocabulary consisting of items such as 'Lazarus', 'Elysium', 'paradise', 'heaven', 'hell', etc. Thus, given the dreadful conditions of the poor, 'who can wonder that the public-house is "the Elysian field" of the tired toiler', queries the *Fall Mall Gazette* (1883). On the other hand, the *Daily Mail* (1911) refers to a particular workhouse at Camberwell as nothing less than a 'Poor Law Elysium on this side of the Great Divide', in an article that enumerates 'the creature comforts of the penniless man in the Camberwell Elysium'. The same article links inhabitants of the workhouse to Lazarus - 'the spectacles provided for Lazarus are perfectly rose-coloured, you see. The atmosphere is quite serene and akin to golden'. Somewhat

surprisingly a similar reference to Lazarus surfaces in Orwell's 'The Spike' (*Adelphi Magazine*, 1931), though here inflected very differently:

Old 'Daddy', aged seventy-four, with his truss, and his red, watering eyes: a herring-gutted starveling, with sparse beard and sunken cheeks, looking like the corpse of Lazarus in some primitive picture.

This, of course, is only one kind of strand in the vocabulary of such texts, with variable histories for its individual elements (the invocation of Elysium, for instance, seems a particularly Victorian gesture), and a variable prominence in the texts it surfaces in. In broad terms, however, such a vocabulary serves to represent the conditions of the poor in a particular way - as produced by blind fate, impersonal justice or the wickedness of the poor themselves - and thence to represent a determinate range of responses, from Christian charity to punitive regulation. This clearly helps to close off certain modes of explanation and action. Poverty is a fate ascribed to people, either blindly or on the basis of their own fecklessness. It is not explained as a condition produced by a particular social system. Particular selections in vocabulary are thus part of particular modes of representation doing particular kinds of ideological work.

#### 4.2. Relations

The same texts, however, shift markedly in the kinds of relation they adopt to their readership, and the way they position the reader with respect to the conditions described.

Sometimes they issue explicit instructions to the reader:

*Imagine a space of about thirty feet by thirty.*

(Appendix 1: ANINAW)

*Imagine yourself in this very perfect poverty palace, and see how...your life goes.*

(Appendix 1: TWD)

Such instructions may relate to acts of visualization, and in this



respect they can be seen as closely connected with devices that make reference to a scene as if it were immediately present to the reader:

*Here are seven people living in one underground kitchen...  
Here lives a widow and her six children...*

(Appendix 1: TBCOOL)

*Here is peace, another world... Here you shall have rest and ease.*

(Appendix 1: TWD)

In these cases, it is noticeable how it is both the proximate demonstrative ('here' rather than 'there'), and the present rather than the past tense which have been selected. Consequently, the depicted scene is rendered in a way that makes it immediate rather than remote in time and space. As a counterpart to this strategy the reader may be directly addressed and occasionally included within the scene:

*You have to penetrate courts... You have to ascend rotten staircases... You have to grope your way*

(TBCOOL)

*You ring the gate bell, pass the porter's lodge, and the burden of the fiscal problem drops lightly from your shoulders... Here you shall have rest and ease... Just something to occupy your mind, but no task work - for you have come to an age when you are entitled to sit in the light...*

(TWD)

In addition to drawing the reader into the scene by direct address (YOU) the reader may be drawn into the argument by direct question:

*In what place can you find such refreshing spotlessness as your eye rests upon here? On what floors are to be found such freshly gleaming tiles? Where are there brighter walls? Where a more cheerful light?*

(TWD)

*Who can wonder that every evil flourishes in such hotbeds of vice and disease? ... Who can wonder that young girls wander off into a life of immorality, which promises release from such conditions? Who can wonder that the public-house is the 'Elysian field of the tired toiler?*

(TBCOOL)

An alternative emphasis is to construct a first person narrator into the scene:

*No language with which I am familiar is capable of conveying an adequate conception of the spectacle I then encountered... My bedfellows lay... my appalled vision took in thirty of them... Many of my fellow casuals were awake.*

(ANINAW)

*After breakfast we had to undress... We stood shivering... The filtered light... lighted us up... what potbellied, degenerate curs we looked.*



(Appendix 1: TS)

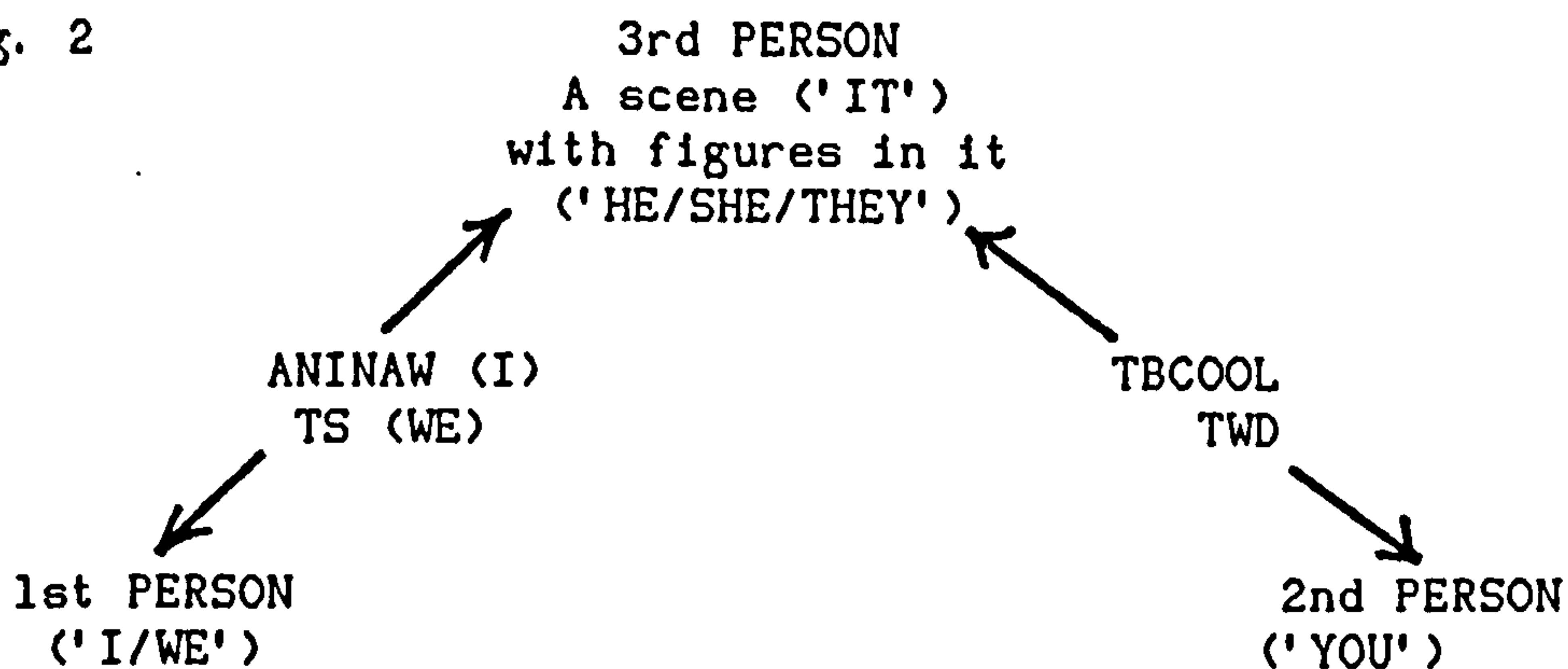
It is worth noting, however, a subtle difference between the first person of the James Greenwood text (ANINAW) and that of the George Orwell text (TS). Greenwood uses first person singular, Orwell first person plural. This enables the Greenwood narrator to preserve some distance between himself and his fellow casuals - the narrator is kept separate from the collectivity which 'they' constitute. In the Orwell text this distance is narrowed by the use of the inclusive 'we'. The narrator is no longer separated from the collectivity constituted by the tramps, though there are occasions when the distance returns, e.g.:

When I arrived *twenty tramps* had already washed their faces. *I* gave one glance at the black scum on top of the water, and decided to go dirty for the day.

(TS)

In general, then, these fragments exemplify a range not only of responses to the conditions of the poor, but they also activate different axes of connection between narrator, depicted scene or event, and reader. The different dynamics at work can be schematized in Figure 2:

Fig. 2



In relational terms, whilst ANINAW and TS tend to activate a circuit between first and third person, TBCOOL and TWD tend to operate along the axis between third person and second person. At the same time, it also happens to be the case that both TCCOOL and TWD, partly as a function of the direct questions and commands adopted by each, are more insistent in the way they actively engage with the reader. In fact,

although it cannot be established on just the texts cited here, we would claim that there has been an overall historical shift in the way press journalism sets itself into relation with a readership. The mode of relation exemplified by TBCOOL and TWD, with its direct address to the reader and its direct question and command, is difficult to find in contemporary newspapers outside of certain types of press advertising:

Just imagine what it's like to have remote control on your garage door. You simply press a button from inside your car - and drive right in.

The question is, is your bank balance enough? The answer probably yes. You can have a beautiful, colourful 4-piece suites for as little as £350.

This historical shift is not really a matter of texts being more or less overtly 'manipulative' or 'persuasive'; rather it is the case that specific representations are set in play along particular circuits which open up for readers different kinds of possibilities for their alignment with and response to texts. Indeed, in Chapters Six and Seven, below, the role of direct address in constituting audiences for particular kinds of genre is examined in more detail.

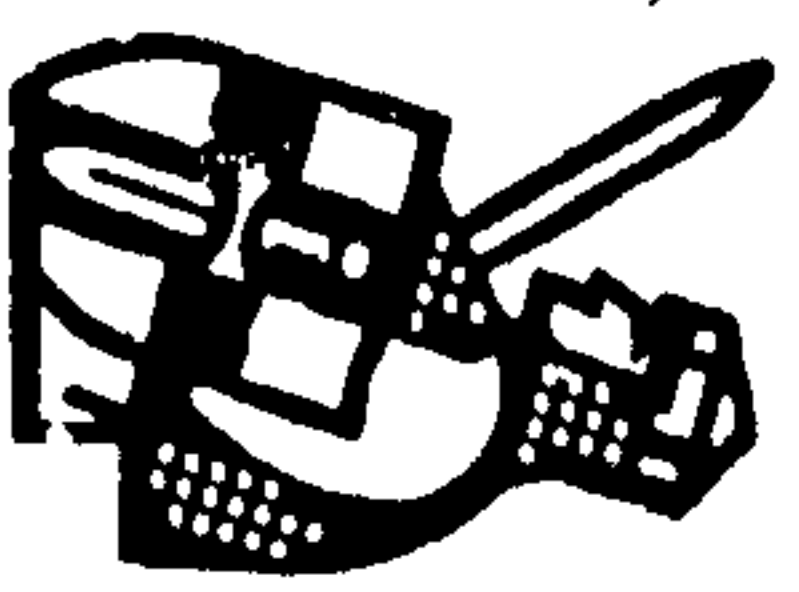
Given the distinction between the representational and the relational in any act of signification, we would like now to examine the *representational* dimension in a more thoroughgoing way by reference to a particular front page of the *Sunday Express*.

#### **5.0 'THE WORLD' AS REPRESENTED THE SUNDAY EXPRESS**

The page in question is from the February 8th 1981 edition of the newspaper, which is reproduced overleaf. For the purpose of this account we shall concentrate primarily on the editorial text, and not attend, for example, to advertisements, cartoons, photographs or to design features such as layout etc. At first sight, then, we are confronted by a mixed bag of separate news stories, in which each typographically bounded section of the page constitutes a separate

**CONTAINS PULLOUTS**





# CUT-PRICE RUSSIANS

## The longest 100-yard walk in the world



### PRINCESS ALEX AND THE ROMANTICS

IT is eyes left, a snappy salute and polite conversation from her pilot all at the same time as Princess Alexandra she flew to Heathrow from Paris yesterday. The Princess has been in the headlines since she married Prince Philip in 1961. She is now the Duchess of Edinburgh. She is also the daughter-in-law of the Queen and the British Council's ambassador in Paris.

## Tories to force Labour split on

### Our colour magazine gets a big welcome

THE NEWS that the Sunday Express is to launch a new magazine, 'Our Colour', has been greeted with a warm welcome. The magazine is to be published on a Sunday and will feature a wide range of colour photographs and illustrations. It is expected to be a success.

## Tories to force Labour split on

IN A move to squeeze dissident Labour MPs on the key defence issue, the Tories are to mount a major debate on nuclear weapons in the Commons soon. It could enforce the final Labour split.

## Tories to force Labour split on

Mr. Michael Foot has also announced that he will accept the Government's offer of a £10 million grant for the development of the Channel Tunnel.

## Tories to force Labour split on

Madrid, Saturday. — A wave of horror rocked the Spanish capital after the Spanish Government announced that it had executed 100 prisoners of the Basque separatist group, ETA.

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# CASH IN ON SHIP STRIKE

RUSSIAN merchant ships are feared to have grabbed a big slice of the world trade normally carried in British ships as the result of the four-week-old seaman's strike. With 225 ships of the 1,000-strong British merchant fleet stopped in ports around the world by the strike, the Russian merchant lines are understood to have made special efforts to get accepted.

## Nkomo man murdered in car bomb blast

by MICHAEL TONER

TENSION is running high in Zimbabwe this week following the murder in a car-bomb explosion of one of Mr. Joshua Nkomo's most prominent supporters, Mr. Nelson Mafembo.

## DRINKS BAN SUCCESS AT BIG MATCH

SCOTLAND'S new law banning alcohol in public houses has been tested at a big football match. The ban was successful, with no incidents reported.

## IRA blow up ship

DUBLIN, Saturday. — Troops and police on both sides of the Irish border were tonight hunting an IRA gang which has been accused of blowing up a ship in the sea.

### DO MURRAY AND HIS MATES REALLY WANT BRITAIN TO PROSPER?

16p

### FATHER DUDDELEWELL

Singing the leek's praises

### The love life of Stewart Ganger

18p

### FISHERMEN BLOCKADE IMPORTS

THREAT TO EXPORTS

### Admire the craftsmanship in a ladder back.

Parker Knoll

### Parker Knoll

No one cares more for your comfort.



This classic ladder back is part of a suite based on an 18th century design. The Florian appears on pages 14 and 15 of the Parker Knoll Book of Comfort.

### TODAY'S WEATHER

RAIN AT FIRST. BRIGHTER LATER

### Kidnap boffin executed

from TIM BROWN

### Joan Kennedy 'to remarry'

Senator Ted Kennedy's estranged wife, Joan, 44, is planning to remarry, according to a report in the New York Times.

### Our colour magazine gets a big welcome

THE NEWS that the Sunday Express is to launch a new magazine, 'Our Colour', has been greeted with a warm welcome.

### Tories to force Labour split on

IN A move to squeeze dissident Labour MPs on the key defence issue, the Tories are to mount a major debate on nuclear weapons in the Commons soon.

### Royal burial for Queen Frederika

THE Greek Government has agreed to allow the funeral of Queen Frederika to be held in Greece after her death in the Royal family.

### SUNDAY EXTRA

A special section with more news and features.



text. The separate stories can be rank ordered, on the basis of length and on the basis of the size of the typeface used in the headline 4<sup>th</sup>, thus:

- (1) CUT PRICE RUSSIANS CASH IN ON SHIP STRIKE ['russians']
  - (2) TORIES TO FORCE SPLIT ON LABOUR ['tories']
  - (3) NKOMO MAN MURDERED IN BOMB BLAST ['nkomo man']
  - (4) KIDNAP BOFFIN EXECUTED ['kidnap boffin']
  - (5) DRINKS BAN SUCCESS AT BIG MATCH ['big match']
- etc.

On looking more closely, however, it is possible to identify features that appear as a kind of continuity between and across the separate stories. We shall try to trace this continuity, particularly through vocabulary or lexis, which we shall examine in detail in relation to the first four stories (though the analysis can be extended to the remainder of the page including the anchoring text for the news-photo).

### 5.1 Lexical items, semantic fields and vocabularies

Certain lexical items seem to dominate the stories on the page, partly through their relatively frequent occurrence. The items BRITAIN/BRITISH, for example, occur some thirteen times in all, scattered across a range of separate stories. The lexical item 'britain' and the cognate item 'british' may be considered members of a set of lexical items (such as 'france/french', 'greece/greek', 'russian', 'american', 'basque', 'zimbabwe', 'scots', 'welsh' etc.) which map the semantic domain of NATIONS/NATIONALITIES, in much the same way as items such as 'red' 'blue', 'green' etc. map the semantic domain of COLOUR. In fact members of the lexical set mapping the NATIONS/NATIONALITIES domain occur in excess of fifty times, with instances spanning most of the texts on the page. We may call these items the *nationality vocabulary*. There seem to be at least two other vocabularies which cross-reference the separate stories. There is an *oppositional vocabulary* mapping the semantic domain DISPUTES. Examples are items such as: 'disagreement', 'debate', 'row', 'split', 'breakaway', 'confrontation', 'squabbles', 'clashes', 'rivalry',

'dispute' etc.; and also their antonyms such as: 'conciliation', 'settlement' and 'arbitration'. Then there is a *violent death vocabulary*, for example 'execute', 'murder', 'killed', 'shot', 'execution', 'death' etc. The *oppositional vocabulary* is particularly interesting in the context of the page as a whole, inasmuch as it is used to characterize a relationship between two parties, nations, factions or persons, and it is only, and always, so used. These items always mediate between two terms, and the terms are thereby placed in a relationship of opposition to one another. Hence, LABOUR v. TORIES, RUSSIANS v. BRITISH, FOOT v. RODGERS etc.

## 5.2. The oppositional vocabulary and the organization of texts

Each of the four topmost texts in the hierarchy of stories may be seen to be structured around a basic opposition. This basic or primary opposition, however, often becomes the ground for a secondary or derived opposition, involving another term already in play. In other words each primary binary opposition *frames* or subsumes a secondary binary opposition. Thus: RUSSIANS v. BRITISH frames EMPLOYERS v. UNIONS ['russians']. These framings occur in each of the four texts, so that we can represent the basic polarities and their relationships as follows: (Figure 3):





Where the third and fourth terms are derived from the second term (B), then the following notation may be used:

A : B :: b1 : b2

It is in fact this notation that most exactly expresses the deep structure *within* individual texts:

RUSSIANS : BRITISH :: employers : unions  
TORIES : LABOUR :: foot : rodgers  
etc.

The former notation, on the other hand, can be used to express the structural homology that exists *between* the separate stories. Thus:

EMPLOYERS : UNIONS :: TORIES : LABOUR  
foot : rodgers :: mugabe : nkomo  
etc.

Using the concept of homology and its formal notation, it is possible to represent structures both within and between the top four stories in the page's hierarchy as is shown in Figure 4, overleaf.

Figure 4 does more than display homologies within and between texts. As one proceeds from left to right along the homologies, a transition is effected from domestic to foreign news which corresponds exactly with a division between, on the one hand, 'peaceful means for the conduct of conflict', and on the other hand, 'violent means for the conduct of conflict'. Simultaneously the *oppositional vocabulary* becomes more pronounced and the *violent death vocabulary* makes its appearance. Accordingly, it would seem that these stories are subject to one basic, organizing homology, which can be stated as follows:

DOMESTIC : FOREIGN :: PEACEFUL MEANS : VIOLENT MEANS

Stories that we have not so far included explicitly in this analysis do in fact make sense in terms of the basic homology. The fifth story ('big match') makes little sense as a news story in and for itself, for it is concerned essentially with a non-event: 'police...reported..no trouble'. However, the fact that there was *no violence* between Scots



A:B ——— DOMESTIC—[A] ——— FOREIGN—[B] ——— [‘russians’]

T1 RUSSIANS:BRITISH::employers:unions  
(EMPLOYERS:UNIONS::TORIES:LABOUR)

T2 [‘tories’]  
TORIES:LABOUR::foot:rodgers  
(FOOT:RODGERS::MUGABE:NKOMO)

T3 [‘nkomo man’]  
MUGABE:NKOMO::faction 1:faction 2  
(faction 1:faction 2::SPAIN:BASQUE)

T4 [‘kidnap boffin’]  
SPAIN:BASQUE::basque govt:separatists

	T1	T2	T3	T4
NATIONALITY VOCABULARY	‘russian’ (x 5) ‘soviet’ ‘british’ (x 6) ::	‘britain’ ‘america’	‘zimbabwe’ ‘african’ ?‘tribal’?	‘spain’ ‘irish-welsh’ ‘basque’ (x 4)
OPPOSITIONAL VOCABULARY	‘dispute’ ‘conciliation’ ‘settlement’ (x 2) ::	‘debate’ (x 2) ‘split’ (x 3) ‘row’ (x 2) ‘negotiation’ ::	OPPOSITIONAL VOCABULARY ‘confrontation’ ‘rivalry’ (x 2) ‘divided’ ‘squabble’ ‘clashes’ ‘inter-tribal suspicion’ ::	NATIONALITY VOCABULARY
				VIOLENT DEATH VOCABULARY ‘executed’ ‘murder’ (x 2) ‘death’ ‘execution’ ‘shot’ ‘killed’ ::
C:D	CONSTITUTIONAL/LEGAL CONDUCT OF CONFLICT—[C]		VIOLENT/EXTRA-LEGAL CONDUCT OF CONFLICT—[D]	

A : B :: C : D

Fig. 4: Four-term homologies within and between four Sunday Express front-page news stories

and Welsh supporters is traced directly to the introduction of *new laws* (the police 'had distributed leaflets to fans explaining the terms of the new laws'). Conflict is thus newsworthily resolved without violence by means of law, and an otherwise enigmatic little news story becomes intelligible as an elliptical form of the homology underlying other stories on the page.

Violence does, of course, occur within the United Kingdom, and newspapers including the *Sunday Express* report it. At first sight it would seem that such events might challenge the basic homology, which locates violence as *foreign*. But there is some evidence to suggest that the homology is at least as powerful a news value as 'the facts' themselves, since there are important ways in which it is preserved in the face of 'home' violence. The Troubles in N. Ireland, for example, are frequently exempted, as it were, from the concerns of mainstream British politics simply by representing them as 'across the water' - literally foreign. Even when politicized violence actually occurred on the British mainland, in Bristol, London, Liverpool and elsewhere, the homology was preserved in certain newspapers by representing the rioters as 'black youths', or as set up by *agents provocateurs* from 'outside' the affected areas. The *Daily Express* even went so far as to implicate the Russians. Such violence, then, is presented as ethnic or foreign in its origins.

The theme of violence as alien to the British political process (whether it's the case or not) is not merely a feature of newspaper discourse, It has, of course, a central place in the ideology of parliamentarism itself. For instance, then Prime Minister Edward Heath enunciated the basic homology HOME : FOREIGN :: PEACE : VIOLENCE in a ministerial broadcast after the 1972 miner's strike:

In the kind of country we live in there cannot be any 'we' or 'they'. There is only 'us'; all of us. If the Government



is 'defeated', then the country is defeated, because the Government is just a group of people elected to do what the majority of 'us' want to see done. That is what our way of life is all about.

It really does not matter whether it is a picket line, a demonstration or the House of Commons. We are all used to peaceful argument. But when violence or the threat of violence is used, it challenges what most of us consider to be the right way of doing things. I do not believe you elect any government to allow that to happen and I can promise you that it will not be tolerated wherever it occurs.

cited in Murdock, 1973, p 157]

The corollary of this position is, of course, that when 'violence or the threat of violence' occurs, it originates not from amongst 'us' but from the outside, from 'them'.

**6.0 POSTSCRIPT AND CONCLUSION**

The analysis presented above refers to the front page of an early (Welsh) edition of the Sunday Express of 8/2/81 (see p.66a above), which will be referred to as VERSION A. In preparing this chapter for publication it was deemed inadequate for reproduction and in the search for a reproducible copy I contacted Express Newspapers, who supplied the version reproduced overleaf, which I will refer to as VERSION B. This late (London) edition turned out unexpectedly to be different from the early (Welsh) edition on which the original analysis was based. The differences are not substantial but they are, nonetheless, worthy of note. First of all two of the headlines have altered. Thus:

VERSION B	[was previously]	VERSION A
"Tribal Clash Fears after Murder of Nkomo Man"	"	"Nkomo Man Murdered in Car Bomb Blast"
"Execution Shocks Spain"	"	"Kipnap Boffin Executed"

The text of the news story, however, in each of these cases remains the same.





# SUNDAY EXPRESS

FEBRUARY 8 1981

PRICE 22p

## CUT-PRICE RUSSIANS

# CASH IN ON SHIP STRIKE

By DON PERRY and JOHN KESBY

RUSSIAN merchant ships are feared to have grabbed a big slice of the world trade normally carried in British ships as the result of the four-week-old seamen's strike.

With 225 ships of the 1,000-strong British merchant fleet stopped in ports around the world by the strike, the Russian merchant lines are understood to have made special efforts to get their services accepted.

The chief executive of a major British line said last night: "The Russians have a long history of striving to get in wherever they can, often by drastic price cutting."

"I do not doubt that one of the gravest problems of winning back the trade will be the way the Russians will more or less give their services away in order to retain the business."

"They do not have to meet the costs of a Western, free world ship and there is no question of their having to make a profit or go out of business."

"What a greater Russian presence on the world's trade lines means in terms of security and the stability of areas where they take a special interest is for others to assess."

The Soviet shipping lines efforts to increase their share of the carrying has been particularly noted between Europe and South America, which Maritime Board officials fear further revolutions: to South Africa; and on routes between Britain and Europe and the Far East.

The Council of British Shipping said last night: "It is now suspected that when this strike is over we shall see a number of our British ships being sold to foreign owners with the loss of up to 10,000 jobs."

Peace talks break down

The situation took a turn for the worse last night when talks between leaders of the shipping employers and the National Union of Seamen at the Westminster headquarters of ACAS the conciliation agency broke down after ten hours.

Ship supplying oil rigs in the North Sea could see the involvement in the dispute and North Sea oil supplies threatened.

Union leaders were proposing that if the dispute was to go to arbitration they will only accept such a move if it is first conceded that the employers will add some extra to the basic 13 per cent increase already on offer.

Arbitration would then be on the question of overtime pay. The union is demanding overtime pay at time and a half instead of the present time and a quarter.

Some union militants are beginning to press for a new demand that weekend overtime shall be paid at double time.

# Tribal clash fears after murder of Nkomo man

by MICHAEL TONER

TENSION is running high in Zimbabwe this week-end following the murder in a car-bomb explosion of one of Mr Joshua Nkomo's most prominent supporters, Mr Nelson Marumbo.

The murder which follows a week of confrontation between the Zimbabwe army and guerrillas loyal to Mr Nkomo, adds a savage new twist to the bitter factional rivalry which has divided the Patriotic Front.

Our Salisbury correspondent Paul Richards reports that the killing in the country is probably the most serious internal squabble in the Nkomo faction.

But at a time when both Mr Mugabe and Mr Nkomo are desperately worried about the possibility of violent clashes between guerrillas and army members, the incident could well increase inter-tribal suspicions.

Mr Marumbo, a shadow minister and member of Mr Nkomo's Central Committee, was killed when his car hit a landmine planted in the driveway of his suburban home. His nephew, who was with him was also killed.

The blast was so powerful that it cut the car in two.

Loyal

Neighbours reported seeing two Africans near the house before the explosion.

Whatever local rumours may suggest about Mr Marumbo being killed by his own colleagues, there are those who believe he could have been a victim of the former guerrillas loyal to Mr Mugabe.

However, local sources believe strongly to the view that he was killed by soldiers. Several weeks ago, Mr Marumbo apparently telephoned a local newspaper in a state of shock claiming that his life had been threatened by the factions within his own party.

National army units confronted Mr Nkomo's former Zikpa guerrillas in Salisbury's city centre last week in an attempt to remove them to a remote assembly camp in Western Zimbabwe.

Savoy to sell 100 rooms

A third of the famous 31-year-old Savoy Hotel in the Strand is to be put up for sale.

More than 100 bedrooms—set at £50 a night for a single room—are involved and at least one would-be buyer—reported to be a property firm—is very interested.

Sunday Telegraph goes up to 25p

The price of the Sunday Telegraph is to go up to 25p from next week, it was announced last night.

TODAY'S WEATHER MOSTLY DRY BUT RAIN IN PLACES

Monday

## The longest 100-yard walk in the world

IT was rush hour but stone in the normally busy street, its outlines partly obscured by fog, stood just one lone vehicle.

All buildings nearby had been evacuated. Police and troops barred entry to the area.

For the vehicle was a petrol tanker it had 3,500 gallons of fuel aboard. And concealed somewhere aboard, too, was a bomb.

Earlier that day, the tanker had been hijacked in Belfast by the IRA, and the driver had been forced to park it outside one of the city's main police stations.

Now someone had to force himself to make the spine-tingling 100-yard walk from the safety portico to the tanker.

Someone had to peer under the vehicle and open the cab door; someone had to climb the ladder and open the cage on the top of the tank; someone had to search for the bomb, and having found it, attempt to disarm it, knowing that it might contain traps never encountered before and that the consequences of one tiny error.

The task fell to a man whose official designation in the Army in Northern Ireland was CATO—Chief Ammunition Technical Officer.

CATO at that time was Lieut. Colonel Derrick Patrick, CBE. The tanker bomb outside the police station was just one of scores of hazardous assignments he tackled.

There were other tanker bombs—though a civil servant coolly announced that the loss of a bomb disposal officer was financially more acceptable than the cost of modifying the vehicles to make them less vulnerable.

And there was the chimney bomb. To get at this, Colonel Patrick had to climb on the roof of the house. When he was stranded on the edge, and in the act of hitting the device out of the chimney, it began to tick.

Colonel Patrick, who died recently, had told the story of his fight against the Ulster bombers. His book, FETCH FELIX, is a vivid record of the realties behind the almost routine news headlines from Northern Ireland reporting yet another "incident".

Extracts from FETCH FELIX are to appear in the SUNDAY EXPRESS, starting next Sunday.

## Royal burial for Queen Frederika

THE Greek Government has agreed to allow the funeral of exiled Queen Frederika to be held at the royal family cemetery in Greece after her death on Friday.

The 63-year-old mother of the former King Constantine died from heart failure after an eye operation in Madrid, where she was staying with her daughter, Queen Sophia.

## Execution shocks Spain

MADRID, Saturday:—A wave of horror rocked Spain yesterday after the cold-blooded terrorist murder of one of the country's leading nuclear engineers.

The body of Jose Maria Ivan, 29-year-old father of five, was found in a wood outside Bilbao.

He had been condemned to death by a revolutionary court of the Basque separatist organisation ETA for playing a major part in the construction of Spain's biggest nuclear power station.

Ryan whose grandfather was Irish-Welsh, was kidnapped as he left the power station at Lemnos, near Bilbao, on January 28.



## JOAN KENNEDY'S SPECIAL FRIEND

JOAN KENNEDY, estranged wife of Senator Ted Kennedy, steps out with her special friend—handsome young doctor Jerry Aronoff. The couple, who U.S. newspapers predict will marry as soon as the Kennedy's divorce goes through, are pictured arriving at the Boston Ballet. It was the fifth occasion

that Mrs Kennedy, 44, and Dr Aronoff, 32, have been seen together publicly in the two weeks since she left her husband and moved back to her Boston flat. The wealthy doctor said: "I enjoy Joan's company enormously. I would describe our relationship as 'special friends.' But we have not discussed marriage."

# Tories to force split on Labour

IN A move to squeeze dissident Labour MPs on the key defence issue, the Tories are to mount a major debate on nuclear weapons in the Commons soon. It could enforce the final Labour split.

Violent disagreement with Labour Conference decisions on Britain's retention of nuclear weapons is one of the top policy reasons for the threatened breakaway by the Social Democrats, who include 11 Labour M.P.s.

Should they vote against the Opposition line in the debate it would be a sign of rebellion that would mean instant crisis for Labour and the possible withdrawal of the Labour whip.

That would speed the impending split by forcing the whole nuclear row in the Labour Party out into the open.

The Government's aim in the debate will be to obtain Commons sanction for going ahead with Trident, the successor to the Polaris nuclear submarine, and for accepting American-controlled Cruise missiles in Britain.

Doubts

The dissidents are not expected to support the Government's Trident programme. The group, including Mr William Rodgers, have doubts about going ahead with it because the cost could eat into Britain's conventional military efficiency.

But the Cruise missiles, rejected by the last Labour Conference, is seen as an important undertaking in terms of Britain's continued full effectiveness as a NATO ally.

Mr Michael Foot has also pronounced against Britain accepting Cruise missiles. In a television interview of October 28 he said he would "send them back" if he became Prime Minister.

"I believe that there is every possibility of getting a negotiation with the Russians before then that could prevent them being stationed here at all," he said.

Mr Rodgers' comment on that was: "Mr Foot's remarks

## Our colour magazine gets a big welcome

THE NEWS that the Sunday Express is to publish a colour magazine with every copy of the Sunday Express from April 12 has met with universal approval from readers and advertisers alike.

The Sunday Express is already the most powerful single advertising medium in the country. And now the Sunday Express will offer advertisers a new dimension—the delights of a free colour supplement every week-end.

Advertisers are particularly attracted by the fact that nearly six million of these readers do not read any of the existing Sunday colour supplements. In the Sunday Express colour magazine offers them an unparalleled new advertising opportunity.

If you are not already a regular reader, make sure of your order for April 12th.

by KEITH RENSRAW

were a plain statement of unilateralism.

This is not the view of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and I do not believe it is the view of Labour voters."

So the Tories, confident of their majority in the Commons, are stoking up pressure for the dissidents to stand up and be counted, and for the Opposition to be acutely embarrassed.

The Opposition will be able to amend the Government motion, but a blank rejection of nuclear weapons would produce a revolt.

Cruise missiles, upon which the Commons row is likely to centre, start arriving in Britain and dropping in autumn of 1982.

# British coal ship sinks —IRA threat

from JOHN LEY, Belfast, Saturday

A BRITISH coal ship sank off the Irish coast late this afternoon after being blown up by an IRA gang.

The Liverpool-based Nellie M was rocked by two explosions while anchored on Loch Foyle, about 150 yards off Kesh, Co Donegal.

Masked IRA men had boarded the collier and ordered off the crew before planting explosives.

No one was hurt in the blast and at first the ship was left only partly submerged.

IRA bomb experts stood by to defuse two unexploded

bombs still on board, before the Nellie M finally sank in about 30 feet of water.

Troops and police on both sides of the Irish border launched a hunt for the bombers.

One member of the Provisional gang had warned a regular reader magazine of your order for April 12th.

Northern Ireland waters would be targets for attack.

A National Union of Seamen spokesman in London refused to comment on the warning.

"We would not want to make any comment until we have had an opportunity of speaking with members of the crew," he said.

The Nellie M is owned by the Co-Manthorpe Line and managed by a William Orow Co. of Liverpool. Its vessel supply cargoes of oil and grain to ports in Northern Ireland and Donegal in the Irish Republic.

## Nimmo in a desert crash

DUBAI Saturday:—Actor Derek Nimmo went for a ride across the desert, but finished up in hospital with spinal injuries.

His Range Rover dived 10ft over a sand dune.

Nimmo and a British companion are touring Gulf countries with the play 'Say Who You Are,' which opened in Dubai last week.

## Journalists halt court move

Journalists on the Sunday Times voted yesterday not to proceed with legal action over the planned takeover of Times Newspapers by Mr Rupert Murdoch.

The journalists were due to begin court proceedings tomorrow, challenging the Government's decision not to refer the bid to the Monopolies Commission.

## SUNDAY EXTRA



Appalling work had, dear Nothing but pink forms and vital statistics—night and day

DO MURRAY AND HIS MATES REALLY WANT BRITAIN TO PROSPER? P 16



Father Duddlewell played the fiddle at the golden wedding party... but the joyful occasion was soon to be overshadowed by tragedy P 8 & P 9



Singing the leek's praises P 20



FASHION Navy and White gives a nautical look to spring P 18

The love life of Stewart Granger P 6

TV & RADIO P 22

PHONE STD CODE 01 353 8000

THREAT TO E... KIDNAPPED

## Admire the craftsmanship in a ladder back.



This classic ladder back chair is part of a suite based on an 18th century design. It's called the Florian and it's hand finished.

The Florian appears on pages 14 and 15 of the Parker Knoll Book of Comfort.

Parker Knoll No one cares more for your comfort.

See Black Dept. 304, Parker Knoll Furniture Limited, P.O. Box 22, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP13 5DJ. Please send me my free copy of the Parker Knoll Book of Comfort.

Name Address

Secondly, some stories are developed, others excluded. Thus, one small story ("Drinks Ban Success"), discussed in the analysis above, disappeared completely. Another small story, headlined "IRA Blow up Ship", which had previously occupied the minor position currently taken by the Nimmo story at the foot of the page, was developed and given greater salience to become "British Coal Ship Sinks - IRA Threat". The story that ran in VERSION A (the early edition) of the Sunday Express front page is as follows:

DRINKS BAN SUCCESS  
AT BIG MATCH

Scotland's new law banning alcohol from sports grounds stood up well yesterday to the first major test when Scotland's international rugby team entertained the Welsh at Edinburgh.

Police on duty at Murrayfield reported virtually no trouble as thousands of good-humoured Welsh fans left the stadium after seeing their team lose by 15 points to 6.

Before the match police outside the ground distributed leaflets to fans explaining the terms of the new laws. Under the criminal justice (Scotland) Act, which became operative last Sunday, it is now an offence "to attempt to enter a ground carrying a drinks container or have any such container in your possession inside the ground."

One senior police officer on duty at the stadium said: "The sobriety of the crowd has been remarkable."



The original commentary given above did, I think, adequately enough account for its presence as an elliptical form of the homology (viz. 'peace at home through due process of the law') in which the foreign dimension has not been realised. At the same time, however, we did point out its enigmatic status inasmuch as it reports essentially a non-event. In the light of these comments it is significant that it was precisely this story that was dropped from the late edition. Even more significant, however, are the transformations that take place to fill the gap left by its exclusion. The story "British Coal Ship Sinks - IRA Threat" was formerly a short note headlined "IRA Blow Up Ship". Its new prominence and new headline only serve to confirm and accentuate the outlines of the analysis given above, inasmuch as increased salience is given to the vocabularies of 'nationality', 'division' and 'violence'. It would certainly appear to bear out the point made in the commentary above concerning the treatment of events in Northern Ireland, which are handled as if they were outside of, and marginal to, mainstream British politics: effectively they are displaced to the 'foreign' side of the homology.

Changes in the wording of the other headlines are also of interest. One change accentuates further the vocabulary of division ("*Tribal Clash Fears after Murder of Nkomo Man*"). The other accentuates the nationality vocabulary ("*Execution Rocks Spain*"). Both, of course, preserve elements of the violence vocabulary ("*Murder*" & "*Execution*"). We can see, therefore, that the changes are all in the direction of confirming and accentuating the homology delineated in the analysis of the earlier edition. It may be too bold a claim to suggest that the analysis of VERSION A predicted the direction of the changes in VERSION B. But the underlying homology revealed in the analysis of VERSION A

seems to have provided an implicit logical deep structure for the transformations that produced VERSION B.

In effect, therefore, what this chapter displays - in addition to the way texts differentially shape up to their audience - is also the linguistic shaping of events in media accounts. Close attention to the vocabulary of stories in the *Sunday Express* front page reveals a similarity of structure across the separate stories and points towards an underlying homology that links them all. To some extent, this can be seen in Lévi-Straussian terms as the basic myth of 'Britain-in-the-world' which the *Sunday Express* projects for its readership. But from a different perspective it can also be seen - in the diachronic comparison between different editions of the same page - as a regulatory principle that underlies the process of production itself. The homology works in a more abstract and less obvious way than, for example 'news values' (see Galtung & Ruge, 1973); it works as a principle of semiotic organisation, assimilating certain materials to its structure and excluding others.

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#### FOOTNOTES

1. Both Eco (1981) and Laclau (1980) have drawn attention to the way in which popular discourses may revolve around fundamental oppositions.
2. The terms figure importantly in the work of Michael Halliday. The most relevant source of them is his thoroughgoing attempt to theorise the relationship of language to social structure in *Language as Social Semiotic* (1978)



3. See Van Dijk's (1977) examination of the distinction between semantics and pragmatics and the relation of both to discourse.
4. See Austin (1962).
5. The concept is drawn from the work of Lévi-Strauss. See especially 'The structural study of myth', in Lévi-Strauss (1963). Accounts may also be found in Leach (1976) and Culler (1975).

*Appendix 1: Four Texts on Poverty*

(ANINAW) James Greenwood, "A night in a workhouse", *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1866.

No language with which I am acquainted is capable of conveying an adequate conception of the spectacle I then encountered. Imagine a space of about thirty feet by thirty enclosed on three sides by a dingy white-washed wall, and roofed with naked tiles which were furred with the damp and filth that reeked within. . . . My bedfellows lay . . . distributed over the flagstones in a double row, on narrow bags scantily stuffed with hay. At one glance my appalled vision took in thirty of them . . .

(TBCOOL) "The bitter cry of outcast London", *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1883.

Few who will read these pages have any conception of what these pestilential human rookeries are, where tens of thousands are crowded together amidst horrors which call to mind what we have heard of the middle passage of the slave ship. To get into them you have to penetrate courts reeking with poisonous and malodourous gases arising from accumulations of sewage and refuse . . . You have to ascend rotten staircases . . . You have to grope your way along dark and filthy passages swarming with vermin.

(TWD) "The workhouse deluxe", *Daily Mail*, 1911.

Profound nonsense is written about the Poor Law system; but imagine yourself in this very perfect poverty Palace at Camberwell, and see how, under a benevolent and indulgent Board of Guardians, your life goes. Here you shall have rest and ease; a little digging, perchance; a little cleaning, perhaps; . . . In what palace can you find such refreshing spotlessness as your eye rests upon here? On what floors are to found such freshly gleaming tiles? Where are there brighter walls? Where a more cheerful light?

(TS) Orwell, "The spike", *Adelphi Magazine*, 1931.

After breakfast we had to undress again for the medical inspection . . . It was an instructive sight. We stood shivering naked to the waist in two long ranks in the passage. The filtered light, bluish and cold, lighted us up with unmerciful clarity. No one can imagine unless he has seen such a thing, what pot-bellied, degenerate curs we looked.



**CHAPTER THREE**

**LANGUAGE AND REPRESENTATION**

*From:*

*(1986) An Introduction to Language and Society*

**Chapter Ten**

We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.

(Edward Sapir)

We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages...We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organise it in this way - an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language.

(Benjamin Lee Whorf)

## **1.0 LANGUAGE AND REPRESENTATION.**

Language enables us to talk with each other. At the same time it enables us to talk about something. It provides us with not just a mode of interaction, but also with a capacity for representation. In the foregoing chapter we considered some of the interpersonal possibilities of language. Here we turn (in the terms of chapter 3: §1.0) to the IDEATIONAL possibilities of language. It is these which provide us with the means for apprehending and comprehending, to ourselves and with others, the world in which we live.

We are immediately faced, however, with a fundamental question: do all human languages represent the world in the same way; or do different languages (by virtue of their different vocabularies and structures) provide different ways of experiencing and understanding the world, in much the same way as different kinds of speaking practice make possible different modes of relation?

## **2.0 TWO CONFLICTING POSITIONS: THE 'UNIVERSALIST' VERSUS THE 'RELATIVIST'.**

Fundamentally, we can understand the way in which language represents the world to us in terms of two opposing positions. According to one view, human beings generally (whatever their culture or languages) are endowed with a common stock of basic concepts - 'conceptual primes' as they are sometimes known - out of which more elaborate conceptual systems and patterns of thought can be constructed. Language, according to this view, is merely a vehicle for expressing the conceptual system which exists independently of it. And, because all conceptual systems share a common basis, all languages turn out to be fundamentally similar. They will all, for instance, find some way of expressing such conceptual primes as relative height (e.g. "up" v. "down"), relative distance (e.g. "near" v. "far"), relative time (e.g. "now" v. "then").

According to this position, thought determines language; and consequently separate languages represent the world in closely equivalent ways. We might characterise this view as the "universalist" position.

The alternative position maintains that thought is difficult to separate from language; each is woven inextricably into the other. Concepts can only take shape if and when we have the words and structures in which to express them. Thinking depends crucially upon language. Because the vocabularies and structures of separate languages can vary so widely, it makes no sense to posit conceptual primes of a universal nature. Indeed, it is not at all likely that different languages represent the world in equivalent ways. On the contrary, habitual users of one language will experience and understand the world in ways peculiar to that language and different from habitual users of another language. The latter viewpoint might be termed the 'relativist' position.

### *3.0 VOCABULARY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LANGUAGES*

In support of the relativist position it is clear that the continuum of experience is differently dissected by the vocabularies of different languages. The Hopi Indians of North America have one word 'masalytaka' to designate all flying objects (apart from birds). Thus, they actually call an insect, an aeroplane, and an aviator by the same word, where English provides quite separate lexical items. And on the other hand, where we have at most three lexical items to distinguish types of snow ('snow', 'slush', 'blizzard'), Eskimos have at least five, in order to distinguish between 'falling snow', 'wind-driven flying snow', 'snow on the ground', 'snow packed hard like ice', and 'melting snow'.

Even quite closely related languages make distinctions in experience in different ways. French, for example, makes a distinction between a river



which flows into a river ('riviere') and one which flows into the sea ('fleuve'), a distinction which has no lexical counterpart in English where the same word 'river' is used in both cases. On the other hand the French word 'mouton' is used to designate both 'dead sheep's meat' and 'sheep's meat prepared for the table', which in English would be designated respectively 'mutton' and 'lamb' (cp. 'dead as mutton' v. 'lamb and mint sauce').

Some of the most striking differences between the vocabulary of separate languages show up in the arrangement of colour terms. Whereas English operates with eleven basic colour terms ('black', 'white', 'red', 'green', 'yellow', 'blue', 'brown', 'purple', 'pink', 'orange' and 'grey'), some languages operate with more, some with less. Russian and Hungarian, for example, deploy twelve, the former making a distinction between two types of blue, the latter between two types of red. The Philippine language of Hanunoo, however, makes do with four basic colour terms:

(ma)biru	=	black, dark tints of other colours
(ma)lagti	=	white, light tints of other colours
(ma)rara	=	maroon, red, orange
(ma)latuy	=	light green, yellow, and light brown

And Jale, a language of the New Guinea highlands, basically makes do with one term for white, one for black. The way in which the colour spectrum is segmented can thus vary quite dramatically from language to language.

#### **4.0 GRAMMATICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LANGUAGES.**

However, the really fundamental differences between languages operate at more than the level of vocabulary: they operate within the structural patterns of the language itself. Thus, differences between languages may be found in the way they are structurally patterned to handle such basic notions as time, cause and effect, agency, spatial relations, and so on. The linguist with whom the relativist claim is

most associated - Benjamin Lee Whorf - argued, for example, that time is handled very differently in English than in Hopi. Whereas English grammar provides for at least two tenses, Hopi seems to have none. Instead, their verb forms distinguish between what is subjective and what is objective, the subjective form including both the future and everything that is 'mental'. Nor does Hopi seem to distinguish between distance in time and distance in space.

This does not make English a better language than Hopi, since Hopi makes other distinctions that are lacking in English. (Indeed, Whorf said English compared to Hopi was "like a bludgeon compared to a rapier".) But it did lead Whorf to propose "a new principle of relativity, which holds

that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated. (p.214) .. Users of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars toward different types of observations and different evaluations of externally similar acts of observation, and hence are not equivalent as observers but must arrive at somewhat different views of the world.

(Whorf, 1956: 214 & 221)

## **5.0 DIFFICULTIES IN THE RELATIVIST POSITION.**

Over forty years have elapsed since Whorf wrote these words. Yet, with occasional shifts in the terms of debate, controversy around these issues has remained strong ever since. Evaluating the respective merits of the relativist and universalist positions would really require a book in its own right. There are, it must be admitted, certain basic difficulties in the relativist position. In its extreme form it assumes distinctions in experience and understanding on the basis of linguistic distinctions. So it assumes, for example, that Russians experience the colour spectrum, particularly in the domain of 'blueness', rather differently than English speakers do, because the linguistic terms are

different. It assumes, for example, that because the Hopi linguistic system of tense differs from our own, therefore, they must have a different understanding of time. But evidence to establish uncontrovertibly these supposed differences in experience and understanding has been notoriously difficult to come by. And if one reconsiders the Eskimo example, it is not difficult to see why there may only be in English three individual lexical items that relate in particular to 'snowness'; but it does not necessarily follow that these three items thereby exhaust our capacity to distinguish a range of different types of 'snowness'. An English speaker may well be sensitive in experience to differences in 'snowness' ranging through, for example, fine powdery snow, hard packed snow, deep lying snow, and so on, even when the language lacks a single separate word for each kind of separate 'snowness' condition.

Any claim, therefore, that we can experience ONLY that for which our native language provides explicit categories and distinctions proves difficult to sustain. In certain circumstances we can always think our way around the edges of the categories supplied by our own language, and in this respect language is not an absolute straitjacket - it does not totally constrain our ways of seeing and experiencing. For these and other reasons I would wish to avoid espousing a simple and total linguistic determinism. I would still want to claim, however, that language plays an active and crucial - if qualified - role in shaping (though not completely determining) the processes of representation, by 'pointing us toward different types of observation' and 'predisposing certain choices of interpretation'.

It should be noted, of course, that it is easiest to describe the outlines the relativist position by comparing one discrete and usually remote language with another. In practice, of course, languages rarely,



if ever, turn out to be uniform entities. They are subject to quite wide ranges of internal variation - by social class, by age, by area, and so on. They are also subject to situational specialisation - advertising, legal, medical language, and so on. Relativism can be seen otherwise than purely in terms of the shift from language to language (the precise boundaries of which are difficult to define anyway); it can also be seen as implicated in the shift from variety to variety. The way one variety, such as a social dialect, or indeed an antilanguage, depicts the world will often involve subtle differences in mode of representation. So much so that it has been commented concerning evaluative reactions to accents that people are not so much reacting to the sound itself, but rather to the sound as socially symbolic of a different way of looking at the world. "I don't like his accent" amounts to a deeper sense of mistrust of the preferred mode of representation that habitually go with that pattern of pronunciation (see Halliday, 1978)

#### **6.0 THE 'INTERESTED' CHARACTER OF LINGUISTIC REPRESENTATION.**

What the relativist position emphasises, then, despite certain difficulties associated with it, is that the world is not given to us directly and straightforwardly in experience. In apprehending, comprehending and representing the world we inevitably draw upon linguistic formulations. One might say that because of this we always see it slightly askew. But it is not so much a question of 'bias' that is at stake here. What it amounts to in fact is that there is no absolutely neutral and disinterested way of apprehending and representing the world. Language always helps to select, arrange, organise, and evaluate experience, even when we are least conscious of it doing so. In this sense representation is always interested: the words chosen are selected from a determinate set for the situation at hand and have been previously shaped by the community, or by portions of the community, to which the speaker belongs.

## 6.1 Vocabulary and the Depiction of Gender.

We can see something of the interested nature of representation by looking at the distribution of English vocabulary items around the notions of 'woman' and 'man' 'female' and 'male'. In a study (Stanley, 1981), based primarily on American English, it was found, for example, that there were more words for men than there were for women. Despite this kind of imbalance, however, there were many more words for a woman in her sexual aspect than there were for a sexually active man. Thus, for women there are in excess of 200 expressions such as "bint", "judy", "tart", "skirt", "piece", "bitch", "tight-bitch", "slag", "scrubber", "piece-of-ass", "cunt", "bird", "broad", "lay", "pick-up", "prick-teaser" and so on. Many of the terms sound pejorative. An equivalent list for men is much more difficult to compile but would include less than fifty items such as "stud", "dirty-old-man", "randy-old-goat", "philanderer", "Casanova", "trick", "lecher", and so on. Not only are there fewer of them in total but proportionally less of them are explicitly pejorative. Some, indeed, have the option of actually being honorific.

Why should "woman-as-sexual-being" require such a proliferation of lexical items? Such terms can hardly be said to be representing reality in disinterested ways. Indeed, it would clearly be wrong to support that there is anything in the sexual nature of women themselves that warrants such an accumulation of codings. The items themselves, of course, give some kind of clue to their origins. They mostly have resonances of certain all-male subcultures: the adolescent male peer group, the locker room and the building site subculture. As such they are more likely to be used by men of women than by women of women. Also there is an overriding tendency in items of this type towards metonymic representation, where a part is made to stand for the whole: it can be an anatomic element ("ass", "cunt"); or an element of dress ("skirt"); it can be an element of the act itself ("lay", "screw"); or a

preliminary to it ("pick-up"). The cumulative effect of these metonyms is to objectify and depersonalise in a reductive fashion.

Obviously, not all men necessarily use such items. And those that do so will probably use them only in certain restricted contexts. And even then, the items will not always and inevitably be used in a reductive and objectifying fashion. But the presence in the language of such a skewed distribution of lexical items generates and confirms a pressure in favour of modes of representation that ultimately help to produce women as a commodity for consumption (cf. "tart").

A similar pattern of representation (as noted by Spender, 1980) seems to be in play around paired items in the language, where by derivation the pairs were once roughly equivalent in meaning except for a difference in gender. Such pairs include the following:

Bachelor	Spinster
Courtier	Coustesan
King	Queen
Lord	Lady
Master	Mistress
Sir	Madam

Thus, one meaning for "king" and "queen" is monarch or sovereign, male and female respectively. But, whereas the former has retained exclusively its honorific orientation towards 'pre-eminent', the latter items is now available for use in designating 'a male homosexual who dresses and acts effeminately', in which sense it is quite likely to be used derogatorily. Similarly, "master" and "mistress" could once be used equivalently to refer to the male and female heads of a household. More recently, however, mistress came to be used almost exclusively to designate 'kept woman' or 'illicit lover'. In like manner "courtesan" now refers exclusively to 'high class prostitute'; and "madam" is just as likely to refer to 'woman brothel keeper', unless it is being used of a child ("she's a right little madam") in which case it carries derogatory



overtones of pertness and conceit. All these items once helped to map an area of meaning to do with social rank and position. They still do, despite social shifts away from courtly hierarchies. As boundaries become blurred, however, what we find typically is the male term retaining some, at least, of its status characteristics, but the female term in a pair becoming increasingly open to pejorative usage or usage for non status marked positions.

It is quite normal, of course, for words to change their meaning. Nor is it at all unusual for some words in some situations to be used for pejorative purposes. It is striking, however, that words associated with women should be consistently downgraded in this way. Such a tendency lends support to the claim that English, at least, is systematically skewed to represent women in a subordinate position.

## 6.2 Vocabulary and the depiction of Nuclear 'Weaponry'.

Another way in which we can see the interested nature of representation is by examining the vocabulary that emerges in the area of modern warfare and nuclear weaponry in particular. (See work by Chilton, 1982 & 1985; and Aubrey, 1982.) Inspecting the range of expressions reveals certain kinds of regularity in their formation. First of all there is a set of pseudo-technical expressions such as "delivery system", "circular error probable", "collateral damage", "flexible response", "dual key system" and so on. At first sight they seem to have the status of specialised terms developed to serve rational analysis, calculation and debate. On closer inspection they prove to be alternatively obscurantist and euphemistic, creating an illusory sense of precision. Thus:

To mount a strike	=	To attack (and, if nuclear weapons are used, presumably to destroy)
A surgical strike	=	Destroying an individual target

A pre-emptive strike	=	Destroying the enemy on the assumption that they might destroy you (otherwise known as 'getting your retaliation in first')
Flexible response	=	The capacity to deliver all types of strike; rationalisation for more, and more varied, nuclear weaponry
Strategic Nuclear Weapon	=	'Large' nuclear bomb of immense destructive power
Tactical Nuclear Weapon	=	'Small' nuclear bomb of immense destructive power
Enhanced Radiation Weapon	=	Neutron bomb (destroys people, not property)
Demographic Targeting	=	Killing the civilian population
Collateral Damage	=	Killing the civilian population
Throw-weight	=	Destructive power
Circular Error Probable	=	Likely proportion of missiles to land within a designated Zone

Generally such expressions have the effect of anaesthetising one to the full reality being referred to. Many such expressions, of course, are susceptible to lettered abbreviation such as the following:

ICBM	Inter Continental Ballistic Missile
SLBM	Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile
ABM	Anti Ballistic Missile
ERW	Enhanced Radiation Weapon
THW	Theatre Nuclear Weapon

Sometimes the lettered abbreviations can be pronounced as a single syllable to give acronyms such as:

MIRV	Multiple Independently-Targeted Re-entry Vehicle
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
PAL	Permissive Action Link
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Talks
MAD	Mutually Assured Destruction

While the use of abbreviations and acronyms is a fairly generalised process in the language, in this case it serves to insulate yet further the expression from the reality it designates.

There is one conspicuous absence from recent official discourse about nuclear weaponry and that is the term 'bomb'. There are many ways of referring to the devices which engender such explosions. They may be referred to as the

the nuclear arsenal

or referred to as a

nuclear device  
nuclear warhead  
nuclear missile  
nuclear weapon

or they may be referred to as

nuclear weapons, weaponry  
nuclear armaments  
nuclear devices

but they are rarely, if ever, referred to as "bombs". To do so would now sound rather archaic or even melodramatic. Yet it is curious that this should be the case. It might be argued that "bombs" by definition need to be dropped from aircraft, and since so little modern nuclear weaponry is designed to be delivered in this way the term has consequently become obsolete. But "bomb" has never been thus restricted in its usage. It is still used currently in media accounts to refer to objects and events such as "the embassy bombing", "car bombs", "bomb factory", "sectarian bombings", "bomb disposal experts", "petrol bomb", none of which need necessarily imply aircraft. According to the dictionary, "bombs" may even be delivered by artillery fire, as in "bombshell". Furthermore, in 1944 when London was hit by several rocket propelled projectiles - the V1 and the V2 - they were known then as "flying bombs!". Indeed, the V1, because of its characteristic sound, was known by the general public as the "buzz bomb!". These weapons were



direct forerunners of current missile systems. Indeed, the V1 flying bomb, might well be seen as a prototype for today's Cruise Missile. But, whereas the earlier weapon could be described as a "bomb", the preferred term now is clearly missile.

Various factors might underlie the abandonment of the term "bomb" from official discourses on nuclear weapons. For one thing, the item "bomb" tends to accentuate explosive and destructive properties. It can also be used for both the action and the entity, as both verb and noun, as in "we bombed Hiroshima", and in "The Hiroshima Bomb". Indeed it provides the stem for various cognate forms such as "bombers!" and "bombing". In this respect the name for the entity implies also both the action and someone to perform it. By contrast, the items that ARE selected turn out to be either non-specific, general items such as "weaponry", "armaments", "arsenal", or terms that emphasise, instead of destructive power, technological sophistication ("device"), or the method of delivery ("missile", "vehicle"). In none of these instances is there any sense either of action itself or of someone to perform it.

Indeed, in recent times if ever the term "bomb" has been used in a nuclear context by members of the defence establishments on either side of the Atlantic, they have probably come to regret having done so on public relations grounds. On two occasions in particular its use has provoked quite sharp reactions. The first occasion involved attempts to win acceptance for basing a new "battlefield nuclear weapon" in Europe. It was a weapon that by its high level of radioactivity was designed to destroy people, not property; and it was called - unusually "the neutron bomb". The idea of the weapon was found offensive by even moderate opinion in Europe ("the ultimate capitalist weapon" as one commentator, somewhat sardonically, referred to it). Such adverse reactions prompted a high ranking British officer on a late night current affairs

programme to lament the public relations ineptitude of calling it a 'bomb' at all. He argued that there would have been much less opposition to it if it had been presented from the outset as an "Enhanced Radiaton Weapon", or ERW for short. And in official circles, at least, that - not surprisingly - is how it has come to be known. A more recent case involved Ronald Reagan making impromptu jokes in front of the microphone, while warming up for his weekly radio broadcast. He announced that he had signed legislation that would outlaw Russia for ever: "We begin bombing in five minutes". The joke was found obscene by many, the reference to "bombing" only serving to increase its offensiveness. Beedham (1983) points out that one restricted context in which 'bomb' is likely to be used for nuclear weapons is in news accounts of the possibilities of nuclear proliferation - a context in which the expression, 'Islamic bomb' (referring to nuclear weapons), would not be an unusual collocation.

Otherwise, of course, we find distinctions being made within the abstract generality of nuclear weaponry by the use of various code names and nick names. These in themselves can prove noteworthy, as may be seen from the following examples:

FAT MAN	=	uranium bomb detonated over Hiroshima
LITTLE BOY	=	plutonium bomb detonated over Hagasaki
HONEST JOHN	=	short range missile from the fifties
MINUTEMAN	=	long range missile
TOMAHAWK	=	cruise missile
PERSHING	=	medium range missile
TRIDENT	=	submarine launched missile
POSEIDON	=	largest American submarine launched missile
POLARIS	=	submarine launched missile
TITAN	=	largest American missile of the 1950's
THOR	=	medium range American missile of the 1950's and 1960's
SKYBOLT	=	missile project cancelled in the 1960's
VULCAN	=	British long range nuclear bomber

Some terms draw on national folklore. Thus, the name MINUTEMAN (an American long range missile) originally referred to members of the heroic militia of the American War of Independence who earned their

title by virtue of their ability to turn out at a minute's notice. TOMAHAWK (the cruise missile) has resonances of the frontier days of American history. FAT MAN and LITTLE BOY sound curiously and inappropriately like Laurel and Hardy.

Other terms tend to be drawn from classical mythology, particularly from those myths in which figures with divine or supernatural powers are depicted. Thus, POSEIDON (the submarine launched missile) is named after the Greek god of the sea, who (as an encyclopedia of mythology puts it)

"was master not only of the sea but of lakes and rivers. In a sense even the earth belonged to him, since it was sustained by his waters and he could shake it at will. Indeed, during the war with the giants he split mountains with his TRIDENT" (another submarine launched missile) "and rolled them into the sea to make the first islands... Often..the appearance of POSEIDON was accompanied by wild tempests, a manifestation of the god's furious rage."

(New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology: p. 133)

The TITANS (Largest American missile of the 50's) derive their name from the early race of gods who waged war on Zeus after he had supplanted them. In the struggle between Zeus and the Titans

"the fertile earth shuddered and burned; vast forests flamed and all things melted and boiled...The sky and the earth were confounded, the earth shaken on its very foundations, the sky crashing down from its heights, such was the mighty uproar of this battle among the Gods!" Finally defeated by Zeus, they were "cast into the abysmal depths of the earth."

(Op. Cit.: p. 92)

VULCAN (British nuclear bomber) was one of the oldest of the Latin gods. In his earliest forms he

"possessed warlike functions and may have preceded Mars as god of battles... (He) was god of the thunderbolt and the sun, then the god of fires." His son, finding doubts being cast on his paternity at a public games held in his honour, invoked the father "and the crowd was immediately surrounded by flames"

(Op. Cit.: p. 205)

Thus, it may be clearly seen that mythic figures who have been drawn



upon are distinguished by their awesome destructive power. To some extent then the recirculation of their names into the sphere of nuclear weaponry seems to have been done with a certain grotesque appropriateness. At the same time, however, the names are quite mystificatory, since they consistently tend to 'supernaturalise' the weapons, depicting them in ways which help to insulate them conceptually from processes which involve human agency and technical inventiveness. These same weapons, however, are designed, developed and produced for profit by large armaments industries. They, presumably, have a human finger on the button. One cannot help but sense, therefore, some crucial abdication of human responsibility and control in this naming process, which re-interprets modern nuclear weapons in terms of heroic struggles in the supernatural order as played out by the gods of the myths of antiquity.

These two areas, then, help us to see something of the interested character of representation. The selection of items, the emergence of a specialised vocabulary, its establishment as the currency of discussion and debate, none of these processes can be understood as neutral and disinterested. Indeed, more important than the individual lexical items is the way in which they build into complex but, as we have seen, systematically patterned vocabularies. This process does not have to be a matter of conscious contrivance for it to have important consequences for thought, understanding and action.

#### ***7.0 SENTENCES AND REPRESENTATION.***

It is not just lexical items, however, that have fundamental consequences for the mode of representation. Also crucial is the structured arrangement of such items into utterances, in part at least because we are even less conscious about choice of structure than we

typically are about choice of words. Linguistic structure is built up out of the basic patterns that utterances must conform to if they are to be meaningful. Some of these patternings have to do with representing time, some with reporting speech, and so on. One particularly crucial set of patterns is concerned with representing actions and their attendant entities, persons and circumstances. The domain of linguistic structure constituted by these patterns is known primarily as TRANSITIVITY.

### 7.1 Transitivity as a Linguistic System

Transitivity is a way of describing the relationship between participants and processes in the construction of clauses - basically, 'who (or what) does what to whom (or what)'. The key to the different kinds of transitivity relations depends crucially upon the kind of process encoded by the main verb in the clause and the varying roles performed by participants in the clause with respect to these processes. For English, four fundamental types of process may be distinguished (but for more complete and complex treatments see Fawcett, 1980; Halliday, 1985):

Material	'John broke the lock'
Mental	'She understood immediately'
Verbal	'Michael said he was hungry'
Relational	'The main course is excellent'

(A)Material action processes (realised by verbs such as "break", "wipe", "dig", "unbolt") are associated with inherent roles such as an AGENT (someone or something to perform the action), and AFFECTED (ENTITY)

(someone or something on the receiving end of the action). Thus:

John | broke | the lock

AGENT | PROCESS | AFFECTED

There need, of course, be no necessary correspondence between the participant role AGENT and the syntactic element 'subject'. The Passive makes possible one obvious kind of non-congruence, e.g.:

The lock | was broken | by John

AFFECTED | PROCESS | AGENT

Subject | Predicator

The passive thereby allows the topicalisation or thematisation of the AFFECTED.

It also allows the deletion or non-statement of the AGENT, e.g.:

The lock | was broken.

AFFECTED | PROCESS

(B) Mental processes (realised by verbs such as "know", "feel", "think", "believe") are associated with inherent roles such as SENSER (the one who performs the act of 'knowing', 'thinking', or 'feeling') and PHENOMENON - that which is experienced by the SENSER. Thus:

James | considered | the problem

SENSER | PROCESS | PHENOMENON

Mary | understood | the message

SENSER | PROCESS | PHENOMENON

The message | amazed | me

PHENOMENON | PROCESS | SENSER

Quite commonly, the PHENOMENON will not be realised in the surface structure of the clause, but there may be some reference to the CIRCUMSTANCES of the action:



The doctor | thought | hard  
SENDER | PROCESS | CIRCUMSTANCE

Mary | understood | immediately  
SENDER | PROCESS | CIRCUMSTANCE

(C) Verbal processes are processes of saying, though this comes in many forms - e.g. "suggest", "promise", "enquire", "tell", "inform". Typical participant roles are SAYER, VERBIAGE and RECIPIENT. Thus,

I | said | it was time to leave  
SAYER | PROCESS | VERBIAGE

I | told | him | it was time to leave  
SAYER | PROCESS | RECIPIENT | VERBIAGE

(D) Relational processes in their simplest form involve some entity which is identified by reference to some attribute. The process may be realised by verbs such as "become", "seem", "be", "have" and typical roles are IDENTIFIER and IDENTIFIED.

The sky | is | blue  
IDENTIFIED | PROCESS | IDENTIFIER

Other important roles are those of POSSESSOR and POSSESSED as in:

He | had | no money  
POSSESSOR | PROCESS | POSSESSED

Any event or relationship in the 'real world' is filtered through, and given linguistic shape by means of, one or other of the types of

process outlined above. Transitivity relations, therefore, go to the heart of the linguistic construction and mediation of experience. And the patterning of transitivity choices in any one text can reveal crucial predispositions to construct experience along certain lines rather than others. The analysis of transitivity, therefore, makes available an important tool for exploring the ideological dimension of text.

### 7.1.1 Transitivity illustrated

Exploring an example may help to illustrate the notion of TRANSITIVITY. Envisage a situation involving two entities (in this case, persons), one of them being a policeman, the other a miner. Let us further suppose that in this hypothetical situation one entity (person) has placed the other under legal restraint one day prior in time to the moment of utterance. What we have so far specified about the situation thus includes two entities ('miner', 'policeman'), an action or process ('arrest') and information concerning the circumstances of the action. If these elements are articulated together into an utterance, the most likely form it would take would be:

1. The policeman arrested the miner yesterday.

This, of course, is not the only possible arrangements the items can take. Other possible arrangements are:

2. Yesterday the policeman arrested the miner.
3. The policeman yesterday arrested the miner.

Apart from some slight shifts in emphasis, no one of these forms differs significantly from the others in meaning. They all crucially convey the proposition that 'the policeman' is an AGENT with respect to a PROCESS 'arrest'; and the 'miner' is the AFFECTED entity with respect to that same PROCESS. Further alteration of the order in which the items are arranged is likely either to produce nonsense such as:

4. (\*) The yesterday policeman miner the arrest.

Or, it is likely to result in some quite fundamental change in meaning that would really imply a totally different situation, as in

5. The miner arrested the policeman yesterday.

In this last example the roles of AGENT and AFFECTED have been reversed, so that 'the miner' becomes the AGENT of the ACTION and 'the policeman' the AFFECTED ENTITY. But, of course, we are now in a very different, somewhat anomalous, but just conceivable situation of a miner performing a citizen's arrest on an errant policeman.

These examples (with the exception of no.4) display a common relationship in English of one entity (the AGENT) acting upon another (the AFFECTED), in which the respective roles are signalled partly by word order. It is perhaps the most fundamental type of transitivity relation, though - as we saw above - by no means the only one.

### 7.2 The Passive.

In fact, the particular kind of relationship which we have been considering can be represented in English by an alternative ordering of items in which the AGENT no longer comes before the PROCESS, as long as other elements are added in the course of the rearrangement. Thus,

1. The policeman | arrested | the miner | yesterday  
AGENT | PROCESS | AFFECTED | CIRCUMSTANCE

can become

6. The miner | was arrested | by the policeman | yesterday  
AFFECTED | PROCESS | AGENT | CIRCUMSTANCE

with little change in meaning, although the two constructions are clearly very different. The first (1) is the ACTIVE form, and the second (6) is the PASSIVE. The PASSIVE construction has in effect, by expanding the PROCESS to include "was" and by introducing "by" alongside the AGENT, reversed the order the AGENT and AFFECTED and allowed the AFFECTED to come first. Not only may the AFFECTED come before the



PROCESS in PASSIVE constructions; the AGENT may remain unspecified, as in:

7. The miner | was arrested | yesterday  
AFFECTED | PROCESS | CIRCUMSTANCE

This allows for subtle differences in focus and emphasis. Ex.7, for instance, might be produced in a context where it was so obvious who had arrested the miner that there was no need to specify it further. Alternatively - to take a slightly different example - a construction such as

8. Three miners | were injured | yesterday  
AFFECTED | PROCESS | CIRCUMSTANCE

may be used in order to leave the question of AGENCY completely unspecified.

#### ***8.0 TRANSITIVITY AND THE DEPICTION OF CIVIL DISORDER.***

The ACTIVE and PASSIVE constructions provide, therefore, alternative patterns for expressing the same basic transitivity relationship. With this in mind we can see how quite crucial shifts of emphasis can emerge in newspapers reports from one paper to another and from day to day. Here are the opening lines of two reports (discussed in Trew, 1979) from similar British newspapers of 2nd June 1975, both describing the same event:

The Times  
RIOTING BLACKS SHOT DEAD BY POLICE AS ANC LEADERS MEET  
Eleven Africans were shot dead and 15 wounded when Rhodesian police opened fire on a rioting crowd of about 2,000 in the African highfield township of Salisbury this afternoon.

The shooting was the climax of a day of some violence...

The Guardian  
POLICE SHOOT 11 DEAD IN SALISBURY RIOT  
Riot police shot and killed 11 African demonstrators and wounded 15 others here today in the Highfield African township on the outskirts of Salisbury. The number of casualties was confirmed by the police.

Disturbances had broken out...  
(Source: Trew, 1978, 39)

There are some important differences in the selection of lexical items. The Times, for instance, has "RIOTING BLACKS" where the Guardian refers to "African demonstrators". The Times refers to "violence" whereas the Guardian refers to "disturbances". But probably the most significant differences emerge in the contrasting structure of the headline and opening line from each paper. The times uses the passive

(a) RIOTING BLACKS | SHOT DEAD | BY POLICE  
AFFECTED | PROCESS | AGENT

This foregrounds not so much those who perform the action as those who are on the receiving end of it (described, incidentally, as "rioting").

The Guardian, on the other hand, uses the active construction.

(b) POLICE | SHOOT | 11 | DEAD  
AGENT | PROCESS | AFFECTED

This clearly emphasises the agency behind the action. Indeed, the Guardian report generally makes no attempt to displace responsibility away from the police. By contrast, the first line of the Times report is not only in the passive

(c) Eleven Africans | were shot dead | and | 15 | wounded  
AFFECTED | PROCESS | & | AFF | PROCESS

The agent of the process is left unspecified in this clause, to be identified by implication in the next:

when | police | opened fire on | a rioting crowd  
AGENT | PROCESS | AFFECTED

But here, although the police are clearly the agent in an active construction, it is one in which they "open fire on", a process which is significantly more neutral as to its consequences than "shooting dead".

The next day the Times printed a report which began as follows

SPLIT THREATENS ANC AFTER SALISBURY'S RIOTS  
After Sunday's riots in which 13 Africans were killed and 28 injured, a serious rift in the ranks of the African National Council became apparent today.

The events of two days before become simply "riots", in which

(d) 13 Africans were killed and 28 injured  
AFFECTED PROCESS & AFF PROCESS

The agent now remains completely unspecified. This vagueness is reinforced if anything by the selection of "were killed" rather than "were shot" which would at least have implied someone to do the shooting. Indeed, in the absence of any specified agent the cause of the deaths could almost be the riots themselves, rather than armed policemen. This kind of shift is in fact not uncommon in media representation of civil disorder. It is a crucial one. In this case it effectively insulates the account from the conditions that produce the rioting. The possibility that they were the outcome of a distorted and frustrating social and political process is consequently closed off from discussion.

*9.0 INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES AND CIVIL DISORDER: THE MINERS' STRIKE (1984/1985).*

The coverage of industrial disputes in the media tends to focus predominantly on the disruptive consequences of strike action, rather than upon the conditions that generate the dispute (see Glasgow Media Group: 1976, 1980, 1982; and Hartley, J.: 1982). The miners' strike of 1984/1985 was no exception in this respect. A significant proportion of the coverage was devoted to reporting the conduct of picketing - mostly at mines, but also at coal depots and docks. The most newsworthy dimension to picketing was, not surprisingly, the degree of violence associated with it, so that papers even quite remote from each other in political sympathy would commonly headline stories as follows:

WORST DAY OF VIOLENCE (Daily Telegraph: 19/6/85)  
SCARGILL INJURED IN WORST CLASHES YET (Morning Star:  
19/6/85)

However, underlying this common concern with the degree of violence are some quite significant differences. In part, these differences operate in the sphere of vocabulary. The Daily Mail, for instance, somewhat distinctively drew on a vocabulary more typically associated with military campaigning - a vocabulary in which pickets 'stage an ambush',



demolish a wall for 'ammunition', and 'bombard the police'. The latter undergo a 'barrage', but send in 'the mounted brigade on two flanks' who 'charge dramatically', narrowly missing a 'tank trap', and so on. However, it is not just in the sphere of vocabulary that distinctive traits emerge. There are subtle but significant differences in the way that the respective roles of participants are actually constructed in the syntax of different newspaper accounts, especially - say - when The Morning Star on the one hand is compared with the Daily Mail and Telegraph on the other.

9.1 The syntax of 'picketing' and 'policing' in the Mail and the Telegraph.

The Daily Telegraph tends to depict the respective roles of police and pickets in the following way. Where 'police' are focused on as the subject of a clause, it is often in the passive, their role within the clause being that of AFFECTED. Thus:

- a) a police dog...handler | was kicked | on the ground...  
                   AFFECTED                   |   PROCESS                   |   CIRCUMSTANCES  
     ...and | hit                   | with pieces of wood.  
        & | PROCESS                   |   INSTRUMENT

This tendency includes not only police personnel but also their vehicles. Thus:

- b) a police convoy of nine vehicles | was ambushed  
                   AFFECTED                   |   PROCESS

The tendency is even more marked in the Daily Mail where it is extended to include the animals (dogs and horses) used by the police, as can be seen in the following examples:

- c) 41 policemen | had been treated | in hospital  
                   AFFECTED                   |   PROCESS                   |   CIRCUMSTANCE
- d) Police horses and their riders | were stoned  
                   AFFECTED                   |   PROCESS
- e) five police horses | were also injured  
                   AFFECTED                   |   PROCESS

Hence, it is not unusual for a story of 'picket-line violence' in the Daily Mail to open as follows (under the headline THE THIN BLUE LINE HOLDS FIRM):

f) "They were bombarded with stones and bricks, ball bearings and nails, and even fencing staves."

The emphasis, as distributed by the syntax, falls clearly upon the police ("they") as recipients (AFFECTED) of ACTION PROCESSES involving a variety of material objects. Interestingly enough, here, as happens quite frequently in those passive clauses which figure the police as AFFECTED, the AGENTS of the action remain unspecified. In context the most obvious inference open to readers would involve to attributing AGENCY to 'the pickets'.

'Pickets', of course, do figure as overtly specified AGENTS in some causes, these clauses usually being active with 'pickets' as subject.

Thus:

g) pickets. | demolished | a wall  
AGENT | PROCESS | AFFECTED

Or:

h) Pickets | bombarded | the police | with bricks, stones...sticks...  
AGENT | PROCESS | AFFECTED | INSTRUMENT

The main exception to this tendency may be found in clauses where the process is one of 'arrest', as can be seen in the following examples. Here in both cases 'pickets' occurs as AFFECTED in passive constructions where no AGENT is specified.

i) "About a hundred pickets were arrested."

j) "More than 100 miners' pickets were arrested."

Otherwise we find a basic syntactic patterning whereby 'pickets' on the one hand are inscribed with ACTION PROCESSES as AGENT often in the ACTIVE voice, thus:

k) "The pickets started throwing missiles."

'Police', on the other hand, are often inscribed with ACTION PROCESSES as AFFECTED, usually in the PASSIVE voice, thus:

l) "One of them ('police') was struck by a stone."

And when the police do initiate action it is usually with some reluctance:

"Senior officers, their patiences exhausted and fearing for the safety of their men, sent in the mounted brigade on two flanks."

These are broad tendencies, therefore, in the coverage of picketing in both the Daily Mail and the Daily Telegraph. But this patterning of linguistic choice is not inevitable or incontestable, as we can see if we consider the habitual patterns of syntactic selection adopted in a paper written from a different perspective.

### 9.2 The syntax of 'picketing' and 'police' in the Morning Star.

In the Morning Star we find that the police typically appear as AGENTS of ACTIVE clauses, in which case they occupy the position of subject, thus:

A) police | attacked | isolated groups of miners  
AGENT | PROCESS | AFFECTED

Or:

b) fifteen police | dragged | him | to a waiting policevan  
AGENT | PROCESS | AFFECTED | LOCATION

'Pickets', however, (now more typically referred to as 'miners') appear not only as AFFECTED in ACTIVE constructions (as illustrated above), but also quite commonly as AFFECTED in PASSIVE constructions, thus:

c) several miners | were hit | with truncheons  
AFFECTED | PROCESS | INSTRUMENT

Or:

d) one miner | was pounced on | by other policemen  
AFFECTED | PROCESS | AGENT

If miners/pickets do appear as AGENTS, it is frequently in clauses involving some kind of movement or change of location, such as:

e) the majority of the pickets | withdrew | in orderly fashion  
AGENT | PROCESS | -CIRCUMSTANCE

Or:



(f) the miners | massed | round the entrance  
AGENT | PROCESS | LOCATION

Or:

(g) 3,000 pickets | yesterday | gathered | outside Cortonwood Colliery  
AGENT | CIRCUMSTANCE | PROCESS | LOCATION

Overall, then, in the Morning Star it is the police who are emphasised as AGENTS by being inscribed into clauses where, typically, their actions have clear consequences. The miners, on the other hand, either exercise a limited AGENCY in respect of processes involving movement, or appear as AFFECTED with respect to the actions of the police. All this we find in contrast to the Daily Mail and the Daily Telegraph, where 'police' tend to figure as AFFECTED alongside the unrestrained AGENCY of 'miners'. Thus, the actions of police and pickets are constructed in quite contrary ways, involving contrasting patterns of linguistic choice.

### 10.0 CONCLUSIONS

One possible reaction in the face of these divergent patterns of linguistic choice is to try and establish which pattern or set of patterns most accurately reflects 'what really happened'. After all, it is clearly possible for accounts actively to distort, misreport and mislead. But my point here is more fundamental than matters of actual accuracy - or even of loaded vocabulary. It is rather that particular linguistic choices (in this case those of TRANSITIVITY and VOICE) make sense of, and give significance to, the phenomenon of picketing in strikingly different ways. How it might be said that such choices merely reflect contrasting ideological positions with their attendant framework of beliefs and expectations. But I think it is also true that in an important sense such patterns of choice are the ideologies and the belief systems. In effect, certain dominant styles of linguistic construction prefer certain ways of seeing and thinking about an event.

And the more widely and pervasively a structure circulates, especially in privileged communicative contexts such as mass circulation daily newspapers, the more difficult it becomes to select differently - and hence to see and think differently about the depicted events.

Thus, in addition to the way specific lexical items and their associated vocabularies give particular shape to experience, we must also recognise that sentence structure itself can fundamentally affect the way in which reality is depicted. Indeed, we are driven to conclude that reality resists immediate apprehension - it is not just 'out there' to be grasped directly in any straightforward and simple way. Our relationship to reality is mediated: it is given to us in language. What we take it to be is significantly shaped by the items available for depicting it, and just as crucially upon the way in which those items become structured into clauses and sentences. It is in this sense that "the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation." It is in this sense that "we ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement that..is codified in the patterns of our language." (See p.77, above.) What we need to recognise, of course, is that these agreements are partial ones established tacitly - even unwittingly - by particular social groups in the course of their social interaction. And, given the fragmentary nature of modern society, it is clear that in certain crucial cases, such as those discussed above, they do not in fact hold throughout the speech community.

**PART THREE**

**DISCOURSE, BACKGROUND ASSUMPTIONS**

**AND MEANING:**

**LANGUAGE, DISCOURSE & IDEOLOGY**



## INTRODUCTION

The study of the defence issue which comprises chapter four is based on news stories collected during the second week of the 1987 election campaign. Methodologically, it marks a point of departure from the studies reported in Part Two. There the focus was more especially on the relationship of ideology to linguistic form in terms of lexis and lexico-grammar. Here in Part Three the focus turns more exclusively to discourse processes and their relationship to ideology. In this sense, the study of the defence issue is explicitly concerned with texts not so much as formal arrangements of items but as bearing traces (to use Fairclough's term; see *Language and Power*, 1989: 24, 80) of underlying background knowledge and assumptions. Thus, the emphasis shifts from the study of text to the study of discourse. Fairclough clarifies the distinction succinctly:

The text is a product rather than a process..I shall use the term *discourse* to refer to the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part. This process includes in addition to the text the *process of production*, of which the text is a product, and the *process of interpretation*, for which the text is a resource. Text analysis is correspondingly only a part of discourse analysis, which also includes analysis of productive and interpretative processes

However, gaining access to the real processes of production and interpretation is no easy matter. In Sperber and Wilson's case (1986), for instance (see pp 42 - 45, above), only constructed examples are used to illustrate what remain idealised processes of production and interpretation. Even in Fairclough's case, where many examples of authentic text are used, the processes of production and interpretation which are delineated amount to projections of the writer (with allowances made for readers' disagreements). The main proposal in the study of the defence issue, developed below, is that discourse

processes of inferencing are displayed in the discourse that surrounds the topic, principally in the form of glosses on a remark by Kinnock.

In addition there are two other crucial features to the account. First of all, it is emphasised that these processes of inferencing are not normative and automatic (as in most discourse analytic accounts) but elaborative and 'interested' (in the sense of Chapter Three, above): i.e. they serve the interests of a particular group and are designed to win consent, or recruit, to its own ideological position. The glosses, therefore depend upon inflecting Kinnock's remark in particular ways.

Secondly, the inferences that are implicated in the activity of glossing can be modelled in terms abstract machineries which amount to conceptual maps of particular common-sense ideological formations. The study therefore provides a precise, substantive account of the re-working and re-playing of a particular ideological formation at a particular historical juncture. In retrospect, of course, it easy to see how much the common-sense reasoning around defence which took place during the election was very much of the moment; much has happened in the intervening period to trouble its outline contours and there is great need of a follow up study to examine how the news of recent events in Eastern Europe may have undermined the basic scripts that were then proposed as informing common-sense reasoning on defence, all the more so because of the likely repercussions on related and overlapping areas of commonsense.

One final point about Chapter Four: although it starts from a somewhat different position about text and language than that associated with the study of the *Sunday Express* front page in Chapter Two, the actual

conclusions are not dissimilar. Indeed, the elaboration of the homology governing the organisation of material on that page bears close comparison with the elaboration of the ideologics and scripts in Chapter Four, so much so that it could be argued that such homologies might in fact be seen as another form of ideologic.

Chapter Five addresses some of the broader theoretical issues within which the study of the defence issue might be situated, by comparing two accounts of language and ideology drawn from the work of Vološinov and Pêcheux. It explores ways <sup>of</sup> integrating the narrower concerns of linguistic description and analysis with the broader concerns of these two theorists. One particular solution that emerges is a connection between the Althusser's idea of interpellation, as mediated by Pêcheux, and the notion of commonsense reasoning as developed in the discussion of the defence issue. As I argue at the end of the chapter, when someone supplies the inferential links or fills the implicational spaces within a discourse, they are thereby

"recruited to the terms of that very transverse discourse which provides the grounds of its intelligibility. But, insofar as the subject in this way renders the enunciation intelligible, she or he has, by this very act been interpellated"

This is a more developed account than that given in Althusser's classic example of the 'hailing'. It owes much to Pêcheux but goes beyond even the latter's account, I think, in being able to illustrate from the study of the defence issue exactly how - in substantive and formal terms - such inferential links and implicational spaces might be modelled. And in so doing, I think we are much closer to being able identify how historical subjects are interpellated in concrete terms at specific moments.



*CHAPTER FOUR*

*THE DISCOURSE OF THE GENERAL ELECTION:*

*SCRIPTS, METAPHORS AND IDEOLOGY*

Expanded and rewritten from:

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### 1.0 THEORETICAL PRELIMINARIES: TEXT, CONTEXT & IDEOLOGY

In Chapters Two and Three we explored how the analysis of particular lexicogrammatical patterns of selection, as realised in a text, provides a powerful procedure for revealing ideology at work. By examining grammatical processes such as *voice* (active versus passive), *nominalization*, or *transitivity* (how participant roles are configured in the clause), it is possible to recover, or to 'read off' analytically, the encoding of a particular ideological position. The procedure derives much of its heuristic potential from the claim that it makes explicit choices in coding which normally lie outwith conscious awareness, and which yet reside in areas of the grammatical system central to the linguistic construction of reality: thus, a persistent preference for certain linguistic choices over others within a text suggests that it operates with one kind of purchase on reality rather than another. In this way, it becomes possible analytically to elucidate an ideological position that may not be transparently available from a text under 'normal' conditions of reading, inasmuch as we do not habitually pay *conscious* attention to the *type* of grammatical processes encoded into a text under normal conditions of interpretation. At the same time, by specifying particular grammatical realisations against the background of the overall linguistic system, it is possible to foreground the semiotic consequences of those selections.

In this approach, therefore, it is the text itself, as the realisation of choices from the grammatical system, that is considered to be the bearer of meaning, carrying or tracing a particular linguistically coded version of reality.

The main problem with this approach, however, stems from the fact that the text itself is not an inevitable guarantor of its own meaning. On the contrary, any text interacts with its context in crucial ways. This latter insight, indeed, has become something of a truism across a range of cognate disciplines from linguistics and sociolinguistics, to cognitive science and media studies. It was, of course, a cornerstone of Firthian linguistics (under the influence of Malinowski) from its inception in the 1920's, insofar as it proposed a model in which choices in the linguistic system were traced up through separate levels of organisation to a final level of *context*. This was the final level of description (there was no level of *semantics*, as in more recent linguistic models) and other levels were seen as ultimately expounding aspects of its organisation (see Firth, 1959). More recently, however, there have been several complementary advances in specifying exactly the ways in which features of the text interact with context in the production of meaning. Work within linguistic pragmatics (see Levinson 1983) on speech acts (see Searle, 1969), implicatures (see Grice, 1975), and presupposition (see Levinson, 1983) give ample evidence of the ways in which contextual factors help determine the meaning of an utterance. And work within media studies also provides interesting examples of how the same programme will be made sense of in different ways by different audiences (see, in particular, Morley, 1980)

This chapter addresses precisely these kinds of difficulties: how utterances may be open to a variety of interpretations; and how ideology, therefore, may be in play beyond the limits of the coded form. It does so in a deliberately concrete fashion by means of a case study which traces the discursive fate of one such utterance, by Neil Kinnock, across the overlapping institutional domains of political hustings,



print journalism, and the broadcast media, in the specific historical conjuncture of the 1987 General Election. The aim is to display how one utterance from a particular setting (in this case a TV interview) is subjected to a variety of public glossings, which are reported in the press and on TV news, and which seek to fix a particular kind of preferred interpretation on the original utterance.

The substantive proposal of this study is that the activity of glossing is necessarily informed by determinate sets of background assumptions, although these may be explicit neither in the glosses themselves or in the original utterance. These assumptions, however, are recoverable as bridging propositions which secure the intelligibility of the glossings as reformulations of the original utterance. In addition to suggesting the specific content of these background assumptions, proposals will also be made as to their formal organisation. In particular, it is argued that they are structured in two main ways - either as loose networks of argumentation (referred to as 'ideo-logics'<sup>1</sup>); or as prototypical event sequences (referred to as 'scripts'<sup>2</sup>). The concern of the chapter, therefore, is not only with specific elements of an ideology, but also with its formal organisation and deployment.

## **2.0 CASE STUDY CONTEXT: THE 1987 GENERAL ELECTION**

Labour was generally thought 'to have fought a good campaign' in the 1987 General Election; but they were unable to turn this to their electoral advantage. Their defeat was, of course, the product of many factors - apparent improvement in the economy, changing composition of the electorate, internal party organisation, and so on. Such factors may, of course, be seen in terms of deep-rooted social change. At the same

time, however, it has to be recognised that the campaign itself is a discursive event: it is discursively constituted - and this at many levels and in different genres, from the set-piece speech, to the broadcast interview, to the press briefing, to the newspaper editorial. Issues are framed within these genres and circulate across from one to another. Whilst some evidence (Miller et al, 1988) suggests that Labour was considered by voters as unreliable in their likely handling of the economy, it was also very clear that they were perceived to be 'weak on defence'.

## 2.1 The Defence Issue

For three of the four weeks of the election campaign, no single issue seems to have dominated the news.

Each political party, at its daily press conference, attempted to present its own 'issue of the day' - and it was rare to find any agreement over what constituted the daily agenda. In this situation, representatives of the press could assume a role of presenting each party's arguments to the others, airing a variety of subjects which would be subsequently reflected in more or less 'balanced' reports on the television news. [Garton et al (1988: p.5)]

The second week of the campaign, however, was a most important exception. Although the political parties - and in particular the Labour Party - persisted with their own agendas, defence became the dominant issue in the press and was the lead story in almost three quarters of all TV news bulletins. Significantly, as Garton et al (1988: p.10) point out, it was during this period that Labour, who had been narrowing the gap on the Conservatives in the opinion polls, now began to lose ground.

Defence did not become a central issue in the campaign completely without warning. Indeed, there are some indications that it was

emerging as an important theme even during the first week when it was inflected in terms of a Tory attack on the Alliance. As early as Thursday of that week (21.5.87) *The Guardian* had asserted:

PRIME MINISTER'S PERSONALITY THRUST INTO FOREFRONT OF THE CAMPAIGN BY EXCHANGE ON DEFENCE WHICH LEAVES OWEN 'LIVID'

The Conservative manifesto had claimed that Alliance defence policy - like that of Labour - would create "a neutralist Britain .. a frightened and fellow-travelling Britain". Arguments over this claim featured on the front page of *The Independent* on Saturday of the first week (23.5.87); and two stories on the inside pages of *The Guardian* (23.5.87) addressed the same issue under the headings

OWEN ATTEMPTS TO SWITCH FOCUS FROM DEFENCE  
and  
THATCHER'S 'UNFAIR' SWIPE AT ALLIANCE

Nevertheless, Labour emerged relatively unscathed from this. Indeed, *The Independent* on Saturday (23.5.87) reports Kinnock as considering Labour to have had a better first week than they could have hoped for.

"However", the report continues,

he stressed that the Tory heavy artillery had not been turned on Labour. There were still three weeks of hard slog ahead...

- a presentiment which is echoed up by David Owen in the same report:

"When the Tory party turns the full blast of its propaganda machine on Labour, we will have the more popular defence policy - they are going to be hit by the Conservatives, and when they are, we will be hitting them too."  
(*The Independent*: 23.5.87; p.1)

The conditions, therefore, were ripe for defence to come centre stage in the campaign by the time the second week begins.

## 2.2. Kinnock's 'gaffe'

However, some specific trigger was necessary for 'defence' to become promoted to a crucial position. In the event this was provided by a



TVAM interview between David Frost and Neil Kinnock on Sunday morning (24.5.87), in the course of which Kinnock was asked what he would do as Prime Minister if a non-nuclear Britain was threatened by an aggressor who possessed nuclear weapons. Kinnock replied:

"In those circumstances the choice is again posed - and this is the classical choice - of either exterminating everything you stand for and - I'll use the phrase - 'the flower of your youth'; or using all the resources that y you've got to make any occupation totally untenable.

And of course, any effort to occupy Western Europe, or certainly to occupy the United Kingdom, would be utterly untenable, untenable.

And any potential foes know that very well and are not going to be ready to engage in attempting to dominate conditions that they couldn't dominate."

In the context of a spoken interview the statement, for all its opacity, seemed unremarkable: indeed, it passed at the time without further comment from Frost. It could be glossed as claiming that the threat of using conventional forces would be sufficient to deter any potential aggressor. By Monday morning, however, the statement had become news. There are two versions of how this happened. The political correspondent of *The Financial Times* claims that journalists from *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Daily Express* contacted the Conservative party headquarters and prompted George Younger (Tory spokesman on defence) to respond to statements made by Kinnock. On the other hand, Robert Harris of *The Observer* claimed that the initiative came from Tory Central Office itself. A senior Tory is reported as saying that:

It took us a few hours to work out what he'd actually said.

[Observer, 31.5.87]

But, once the transcripts had been studied, Central Office officials moved - according to Harris - with 'formidable speed', contacting sympathetic journalists and prompting George Younger to issue a press release.

For the sociologist of media institutions this is probably a most important process; and an accurate account of it would cast important light on the structures of power, influence, and exchange that interrelate the spheres of party, State, press, and the broadcast media. For us here, however, the precise institutional networks that were at stake is not as important as the discursive operations which went into foregrounding 'defence' as an issue. In effect, Kinnock's statement itself became the nub of subsequent coverage in which it was glossed and re-glossed during the second week: and it is the discursive genealogy of these glosses that is the prime focus of our concern.

### *3.0 Glossing as a Discursive Activity*

On the Monday of the second week both *The Daily Express* and *The Daily Telegraph* carried lead stories on defence. "GUERRILLA WAR A DETERRENT SAYS KINNOCK" ran the banner headline in *The Daily Telegraph*. A crucial component of these stories consisted of comments by spokespersons from other parties on Kinnock's original remark. A statement from Younger, quoted in the *Daily Telegraph* claims that "it is a policy of surrender" [Daily Telegraph: 25.5]. Heseltine, quoted in the *Daily Express*, claims that "what Kinnock is proposing is positively inviting people to attack." [Daily Express: 25.5].

These comments, I refer to as *glosses*, thereby using the term to designate any utterance which seeks to make clear some aspect of the

meaning of another prior utterance. Glossing may be done in various ways - by recoding the prior utterance using alternative lexicogrammatical selections, for instance; or by spelling out some of its unstated presuppositions or implicatures. One type of glossing, of course, may well shade into the other. But broadly the difference may be illustrated as follows: the *Telegraph* headline would seem to be a lexicogrammatical reformulation - the product of substituting 'guerilla war' for 'using all the resources that you've got', and 'a deterrent' for 'to make any occupation totally untenable'; whereas Younger's comment "it is a policy of surrender" attempts to force an entailment, viz. that 'occupation' entails 'surrender'.

### 3.1 Approaches to Glossing

Glossing practices of various kinds are, of course, a common feature of everyday discourse, even occurring within the speech of a single speaker to clarify separate components of a turn. They are, for instance, a prevalent feature of the discourse of the extempore lecture. (See Montgomery, 1977; Coulthard and Montgomery, 1981; and also pp 15-16 above). More generally, the ethnomethodologists, Garfinkel and Sacks (1969), point to their presence in everyday talk as constituting an aspect of that talk's 'irremedial indexicality': it is impossible, they argue, to say in so many words precisely what someone means without becoming launched upon an infinite regression of paraphrase because of the spatio-temporally bound nature of talk (see also several passages in Cicourel: 1973). By identifying indexicality as a general feature of real-time speech, ethnomethodology provides an important insight into the problematic character of verbal communication. From this perspective, the activity of glossing Kinnock's remark in the second week of the election campaign merely enacts in the institutionalised



public domains of broadcasting and the press a process that is prevalent - although often tacit - under everyday conditions of talk.

The ethnomethodologists, however, lay equal stress on talk as a 'normative order', as a jointly and fluently produced practical accomplishment. Despite the problems of indexicality - namely "that the use of particular signs depends upon unstated common knowledge that embellishes the surface signs governed by indexical properties" (Cicourel: 1973, p.95) - participants nonetheless routinely make sense of each other. And it is this basic facility that becomes the focus of the ethnomethodologist's project - the explication of those taken-for-granted methods employed by members of a society in giving sense to the social world in general, and to each others utterances in particular. This very project, therefore, is itself wedded to a crucial assumption: that the interpretive procedures for making sense of utterances rest upon "unstated *common* knowledge". Ethnomethodology, in consequence, overlooks an important complication: which segments of the available stock of common knowledge should be accessed? For it is no less possible that the process of making sense on any occasion may allow for equal access to different but conflicting segments of that common knowledge. As Sperber and Wilson (1986) point out, 'making sense' necessarily involves the interpreter in tacit decisions about which particular background assumption(s), from the indefinite range that may constitute 'common knowledge', is actually relevant on any particular occasion.

In the political context, as in any context where there is a conflict of interest, more than one set of background assumptions may be judged relevant. Indeed, as we shall see, possibly relevant sets of background

assumptions may be in sharp contradiction. Even more significantly, however, the activity of glossing in the political context may involve what could be seen as an active refusal of some background assumptions and their replacement by others which are better adapted to the strategic purposes of the speaker. It is by virtue of such strategic selection that Kinnock's original remark about making "any occupation untenable" can come to be glossed as implicating meanings which presumably he did not intend, and which he somewhat belatedly attempted to disavow.

Thus, 'glossing', in this study involves a dimension neglected in the approach of the ethnomethodologists. For it need not be a purely practical accomplishment, projecting a natural resolution of ambiguity within the parameters of the normative order of talk. On the contrary, both the original utterance and its subsequent glosses can become, in the words of Volosinov (1973), "the site of struggle".

#### *4.0 Glossing: Examples from the Second Week of the Campaign*

Some of the glosses which accumulated during the second week of the campaign, often cited and re-cited in different domains, may be listed as follows (with some initial indication of the relationship between Kinnock's utterance and the gloss):

Ex.1 [Cartwright: Daily Telegraph 25/5]

'It seems as if "the Mujahideen in Penge High Street" were expected to deter Soviet nuclear Soviet nuclear blackmail'

all the resources you have got → the Mujahideen in Penge High Street  
any effort to occupy Western Europe → Soviet nuclear blackmail

Ex.2 [Younger: D.T 25/5]

"It is a policy of surrender"

occupation --> surrender

Ex.3 [Cartwright: Daily Express 25/5]

"The threat of a guerilla war is not something the Soviets understand"

using all the resources you have got to make any occupation totally untenable --> the threat of guerilla war

Ex.4 [Heseltine: Daily Express 25/5]

"What Mr Kinnock is proposing is positively inviting people to attack

Ex.5 [Daily Telegraph 25/5]

*GUERRILLA WAR A DETERRENT SAYS KINNOCK*

using all the resources you have got --> guerilla war  
to make any occupation totally untenable .. any potential force knows that  
--> a deterrent

Ex.6 [Heseltine: Daily Express 25/5]

"The idea of guerilla warfare in the streets of London is ludicrous"

See 1,3 & 5 above

Ex.7 [Owen: Ind/Daily Telegraph/ BBCTV 2100; 26/5]

"He wants Dad's Army back and Captain Mainwaring's return to colours."

using all the resources you have got --> Dad's Army .. and Captain Mainwaring's return to colours

Ex.8 [Thatcher: Daily Telegraph 26/5]

"It seems to me like a policy of surrender, because you can't have guerillas until you have been occupied."

See 2 above

Ex.9 [Thatcher: Daily Telegraph 27/5]

"It is a policy for defeat, surrender, occupation, and finally prolonged guerilla fighting"

Ex.10 [Thatcher: D.T 29/5]

"He seemed to accept defeat, invasion, and occupation. The British



people under a Labour Government would then have to rely on guerilla resistance to the enemy army of occupation."

These examples constitute a representative range of the glosses widely reported in, or furnished by the media, during the second week of the campaign. It can be seen instantly that there is a measure of consistency about the kinds of readings that achieve discursive prominence during this period. The process by which this is achieved is interesting in a number of ways.

(a) It is manifestly a discursive process, involving considerable exegesis of the original utterance, which is referred to, but rarely quoted, in the act of interpretation. Thus, spokespersons embed disclaimers in providing their gloss. ["This appears to me to be ..."  
G.Y.: Daily Express; 25.5] ["..that is what it seems to me they are talking about.."  
M.T.: Daily Express; 25.5] ["..A Soviet occupation, I presume.." M.T.]

(b) The activity of glossing aims to fix the range of possible interpretations in a particular direction, by attempting to control the potential ambiguities of Kinnock's utterance. Even more significantly, the interpretations suggested by the glossings are designed to attribute to Kinnock positions which manifestly conflict with prevailing 'common sense' and 'folk-beliefs'. Some glosses make this explicit - should there be any shadow of doubt - by the adoption of vocabulary such as "The idea .. is *ludicrous*", "The SDP leader *ridiculed* Mr Kinnock's suggestion", "Thatcher said it was *absurd* to argue .."

(c) The patterns of inference required to move from Kinnock's remarks to their subsequent glossings are not automatic but elaborative and evaluative - a distinction proposed by Brown & Yule (1983). They cite an example from van Dijk, 1977, in which two sentences - "This

afternoon a strange man came into my office. His nose was nearly purple" - are related to each other by a bridging assumption 'The man had a nose'. This they give as an example of automatic inferencing. Elaborative or evaluative inferencing, on the other hand, "might be based on such diverse beliefs, that on the one hand, all Americans in China are CIA agents, or alternatively that the Chinese continually harass foreigners for no reason" (Brown & Yule: p.257). These latter types of assumptions are clearly more controvertible, but are deemed by Brown and Yule to underly inferencing of a more interesting and significant kind. Although I have suggested a specific relationship, for many of the examples, between the wording of Kinnock's remarks and the wording of the glosses, the proposed equivalences are really the outcome of complex evaluative inferencing.

(d) Precisely because the inferencing involved is evaluative, it depends upon assumptions that are ideological in character; and specifying such assumptions helps to display the implicit ideologies at work upon the original remarks. Nonetheless, there is sufficient consistency in the range of glossings to suggest broad patterns for the inferencing.

### *5.0 Generalised Background Assumptions as 'Ideo-logics'*

The glosses cited above constitute, in effect, a particular set of readings of Kinnock's TVAM utterance. In this respect, they represent the outcome of specialised kinds of inferencing on Kinnock's utterance by those who produce them; but the glosses also, at one and the same time, require that very inferencing to be recoverable if they are to be recognised as in some sense satisfactorily, intelligibly, and coherently related to the original utterance. It is not necessary that every reader should believe the glosses to be accurate and 'fair' renderings of the

original utterance. Quite the contrary: they are clearly partisan. But if they are to be recognisable as glossings at all ('fair' or otherwise), then it can only be by virtue of some general recognition of the background assumptions that they depend upon. In this section and the following, I attempt to elaborate both the content and the form of these background assumptions.

To claim that

"using all the resources you've got to make any occupation untenable" [K: TV AM; 24.5]

amounts to

"an invitation to attack" [H: DE. 25.5] and "a policy of surrender" [GY: DT 25.5]

involves core bridging assumptions of the following kind, which we state initially in their most general terms.

1. *A nation has enemies*
2. *Enemies are potential aggressors*
3. *Potential aggressors are prepared to attack*
4. *Some weapons deter a potential aggressor*

From these general assumptions some fairly obvious (conventional?) implicatures can be derived. Thus, from

4. *Some weapons deter a potential aggressor*

can be derived

5. *Some weapons do not deter a potential aggressor*

At the same time, however, these core assumptions have a particular socio-historical provenance. Thus, by a process of common sense reasoning<sup>(1)</sup>, those weapons which deter are seen as nuclear, whereas



those weapons which do not deter are seen as conventional. Hence

*4.1 Nuclear weapons deter a potential aggressor*

*and*

*5.1 Conventional weapons do not deter a potential aggressor*

Again by a process of common sense reasoning<sup>(2)</sup>, if the generalised noun phrase 'a nation' is filled with the proper noun 'Britain', then 'a potential aggressor' is filled by 'the Soviet Union'. Hence

*1.1 Britain has enemies*

*4.1.1 Nuclear weapons deter the Soviet Union*

*5.1.1 Conventional weapons do not deter the Soviet Union*

Indeed, the notions of external threat and the role of nuclear weapons in deterring this threat are crucial to these core assumptions.

*6.0 Background Assumptions as Scripts*

The forgoing assumptions can be seen as organised in terms of loose networks of argumentation, supported by commonsense reasoning. They comprise an 'ideo-logic'. In their turn, however, they provide a basis from which further sets of assumptions may be generated which cohere together as a scripts, i.e. as a stereotypical event-sequences.

*6.1 The Notion of Scripts*

The notion of scripts was developed by workers in cognitive science and artificial intelligence (see especially Schank and Abelson, 1977), as a way of describing stereotypical situations in terms of salient events that constitute some kind of episode structure. Lehnert (1980) defines them thus:

In each culture there are a number of stereotypic situations in which human behaviour is highly predictable and narrowly defined. Behaviour in these situations is often described in terms of cultural conventions. These conventions are learned in childhood, adhered to throughout one's life and rarely questioned or analyzed. Scripts describe those conventional situations that are defined by

a highly stereotypic sequence of events. (p.85)

Many scripts are acquired on the basis of first hand experience of repetitive and routine involvement in action sequences. Thus scripts for 'a train journey', 'taking a bath', 'preparing a cup of tea', 'going to a restaurant' are likely to be acquired at first hand. It is equally possible, however, for scripts to be acquired vicariously. As Lehnert (op.cit.) observes,

Many people have scripts for gunfights, bank robberies, and airplane hijackings, in spite of the fact that they have never been involved in any such episodes. Movies, books and television have contributed significantly to vicarious script acquisition. These scripts are general in the sense that a large population share stereotypic knowledge of such situations. (p.86)

Lehnert further suggests that "when a script is shared by many people, that script can be referenced very efficiently." (p.86) So that if a friend mentions that she went out to a restaurant, you infer much more than that she located herself in close proximity to an eating place. The statement would normally imply that the entire restaurant script was executed. You would assume in fact that she went in, placed an order, received some food, paid for it, and left.

It is in precisely this respect that scripts are so important, inasmuch as they suggest how understanding works when it goes far beyond the information strictly given by an utterance. Indeed, scripts seem to provide a tool for explaining how a whole set of language processing problems - such as word sense disambiguation, reference assignment to pronouns, and causal chain completion - may be resolved. In brief, they underpin and guarantee complex sets of inferences from quite simple statements. Consider the following example:

Jean arrived at the restaurant. She sat down and ordered a meal. Later, her hunger satisfied, she took a taxi to the

theatre.

From this chain of statements we are most likely to infer the following:

- (1) Jean was served at the table
- (2) Jean ate the meal
- (3) Jean paid her bill
- (4) Jean got up from the table
- (5) Jean left the restaurant
- (7) Jean went out into the street

etc.

Note, however, that these inferred actions are not explicitly coded in the example text. Instead, they are derived from the stereotypical restaurant script; and it is by drawing upon this script that we make the inferences. It is, of course, possible for us to be mistaken in these inferences, but that is precisely how Lehnert (op.cit.) defines them: "we define an inference to be an assumption that could be wrong."

(p.81)

## 6.2 Scripts and Glossing

The glosses during the second week of the election campaign implicate complex inferences; and, like any inferences relating to event sequences, they are dependent upon scripts. This dependence is rooted in two crucially distinct but complementary moments: the moment of production of the gloss and the moment of its consumption. Thus, not only is a script (or scripts) invoked in the act of making the gloss, but also an identical or homologous script must be activated in interpreting, or recognising, the gloss as derivable in some way from the original utterance. Glosses face, as it were, in two directions; and



in this respect they are significantly double-edged: they invoke scripts on the one hand, and propose scripts on the other.

I have already noted in the previous section how assumptions such as

*3. Potential aggressors are prepared to attack*

*5. Some weapons do not deter a potential aggressor*

become positioned within a common sense process of argumentation or 'ideo-logic'. But when two such background assumptions are brought into conjunction, they constitute more than propositions in an argument. They assume a potential narrative relation which finds its place within a larger script - *'THE NUCLEAR BLACKMAIL SCRIPT'*

*6.1 Britain relinquishes nuclear weapons*

*6.2 (By doing so) Britain loses its deterrent*

*6.3 (Thus) Britain can not deter the Soviet Union (see 4. and 5. above)*

*6.4 The Soviet Union threatens nuclear strikes against Britain*

*6.5 Britain surrenders to threat*

*6.6 The Soviet Union occupies Britain*

The crucial point about these assumptions is that they interlock as a chain of actions and consequences, in which hypothetical consequences are derived from possible actions in a speculative narrative of cause and effect. It is not a script for which we have historical precedents. There is, however, an associated script, which is loosely based on historical precedents, and which may be described as *'ORIGINS OF WORLD WAR II SCRIPT'*. Basic constituents of this script are as follows:

*7.1 In the search for peace European nations disarm*

*7.2 Germany covertly rearms*

*7.3 (By this means) Germany gains a military ascendancy over other European nations*

- 7.4 *Germany uses its superior power to threaten weaker nations*
- 7.5 *The weaker nations are unable to resist Germany*
- 7.6 *Germany occupies the territory of weaker nations by force*

The end-point of this latter script has some resemblance to the end of the 'NUCLEAR BLACKMAIL SCRIPT'. The last constituent of each may be seen as triggering what may be referred to as the 'OCCUPATION SCRIPT', whereby:

- 8.1 *A strong nation occupies the territory of a weaker nation by force*
- 8.2 *The strong nation crushes overt resistance by the weaker nation*
- 8.3 *The Government of the weaker nation surrenders*
- 8.4 *But the population engages in heroic if piecemeal resistance*

This script has in fact two key subvariants, the first of which is the 'WORLD WAR II OCCUPATION SCRIPT':

- 9.1.1 *German forces occupy the territory of a weaker nation*
- 9.1.2 *Germany crushes overt resistance*
- 9.1.3 *The Government of the weaker nation surrenders*
- 9.1.4 *But the population engages in heroic if piecemeal resistance*
- 9.1.5 *Allied forces liberate the territory*

The second variant is the 'POST WORLD WAR II OCCUPATION SCRIPT':

- 9.2.1 *Russian forces occupy the territory of a weaker nation*
- 9.2.2 *The population engages in heroic if piecemeal resistance*
- 9.2.3 *Russian forces quell overt resistance*
- 9.2.4 *Russian forces install a puppet government*
- 9.2.5 *Russian forces withdraw*

Significant portions of these scripts and the core assumptions can be assimilated to a single master script - *'THE BULLY SCRIPT'*:

10.1 *If you are too weak to stand up to a bully they take advantage of you*

10.2 *If you have the strength to stand up to a bully they back down*

It is this master script that underlies the opening lines of a Ministry of Defence leaflet (cited in Chilton, 1985):

*"HOW TO DEAL WITH A BULLY - Many of us have had to stand up to a bully at some stage of our lives. The only answer is to say: 'Let me alone - or you'll be sorry.' And to have the strength to back up your words..."*

The effectivity of such scripts is not dependent on their 'truth'. Indeed, the details of history or experience may render selected constituents problematic. Thus, the *'WARTIME OCCUPATION SCRIPT'* may achieve a partial fit in the case of France, Greece, and Holland, for example; but some or all of the constituents apply with difficulty to the USSR, Yugoslavia, and Poland. Similarly, the case of Afghanistan poses problems for the *'POSTWAR OCCUPATION SCRIPT'*. In this respect, it must be stressed that they are precisely stereotypical event sequences. In part, their effectivity derives from their potential to render unlike event sequences analogous in some way. As such, they amount, in effect, to sedimented forms of common sense.

In general, therefore, it is these assumptions and these scripts that underlie the glossings that develop over the days following Kinnock's remarks. Heseltine's claim that "What Mr Kinnock is proposing is positively inviting people to attack" is derived from 4.1.1 and 4.2.1 above; also from 10. Younger's gloss that "It is a policy of surrender"



is similarly derived; but it also draws upon 6.1 - 6.5 of THE NUCLEAR BLACKMAIL SCRIPT.

The wording adopted in the glossings is, of course, significant. A key expression used throughout the week is *guerilla (warfare)*. Its first occurrence in the media may be traced to the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Express* on Monday 25th May. Thus, we find Cartwright for the SDP declaring:

*"The threat of a guerilla war is not something the Soviets understand" [D.Ex.: 25/5]*

and Heseltine for the Conservatives declaring:

*"The idea of guerilla warfare in the streets of London is ludicrous" [D.Ex.: 25/5]*

Adopting this gloss enables the *OCCUPATION SCRIPT* to be presupposed, applied to Britain; or, alternatively, it can be used to reinforce the background assumption:

*5.1.1 Conventional weapons do not deter Soviet aggression*

Indeed, proposals for resisting an aggressor without using nuclear weapons can only appear ludicrous if the strength of this background assumption is considered to be great. Thus,

*"The idea of guerilla warfare in the streets of London is ludicrous" [D.Ex.: 25/5],*  
precisely because

*5.1.1 Conventional weapons do not deter Soviet aggression.*

Similarly,

*"The threat of a guerilla war is not something the Soviets understand"*  
*[D.Ex.: 25/5]*

precisely because

*5.1.1 Conventional weapons do not deter Soviet aggression.*

It is in light of considerations such as these that the *Daily Telegraph* headline - *GUERRILLA WAR A DETERRENT SAYS KINNOCK* - gains its import.

As long as the background assumption

*5.1.1 Conventional weapons do not deter Soviet aggression*

maintains its strength, then Kinnock appears to have made a ludicrous claim. And, conversely, as long as the claim attributed to Kinnock appears ludicrous, then the background assumption is preserved. In effect, the headlined attribution trades off the background assumption at the same time as it confirms and consolidates it.

**6.3 Crystallising the Background Assumptions and Scripts**

Initially, the mere mention of guerilla warfare may suffice to make any alternative to a nuclear deterrent appear ludicrous. It is quite common, however, for such references to explicitly signal the absurdity (*"astonishingly uninformed and naive" Younger; DT; 26/5/87; "a defence policy which is utterly incredible", Thatcher; TV all 26/5/87; "utter nonsense", "absurd" Thatcher; DT; 29/5/87.*) At the same time, additional elements of the script are made more explicit as the week proceeds. The trajectory can be made clear simply by focussing on quotations from Thatcher in the *Daily Telegraph*. On Tuesday 26/5/87 she is reported as saying:

*"It seems to me like a policy of surrender, because you can't have guerillas until you have been occupied."*

This way of glossing Kinnock's utterance begins to make explicit some of the inferencing that underlies making "guerilla warfare" equivalent to "using all the resources that you have got to make any occupation totally untenable" In effect, it begins to spell out components of the **OCCUPATION SCRIPT**; more particularly, steps 8.1 + 8.3.

*8.1 A strong nation occupies the territory of a weaker nation by force*

*8.3 The Government of the weaker nation surrenders to the invaders*

This same script is elaborated by Thatcher in Wednesday's *Telegraph*

*"it is a policy for defeat, surrender, occupation, and finally prolonged guerilla fighting"*

And in Friday's *Telegraph*, it is emphatically re-stated, so that the major components of the script have finally surfaced:

*"He seemed to accept defeat, invasion, and occupation. The British people under a Labour Government would then have to rely on guerilla resistance to the enemy army of occupation"*

which corresponds to steps 8.1 - 8.4 of the script:

- 8.1 *A strong nation occupies the territory of a weaker nation by force*
- 8.2 *The strong nation crushes overt resistance by the weaker nation*
- 8.3 *The Government of the weaker nation surrenders to the invaders*
- 8.4 *But the inhabitants engage in heroic if piecemeal resistance*

These are instances of the generalised occupation script at work. This same script can be given more particular historical reference, as in the following, where it is actualised in terms of Afghanistan:

*"Are we to face the sort of casualties and violence that Afghanistan has suffered?" [Younger: D.T.; 25/5/87]*

And a similar reference lies behind Cartwright's comments reported in the same paper:

*'It seems as if "the Mujahadeen in Penge High Street" were expected to deter Soviet nuclear blackmail' [D.T.; 25/5/87]*

Kinnock's denial is carried briefly on the BBC News on Tuesday:

*"There is no question of guerilla warfare or Dad's Army" [Kinnock: BBC1TV, 21.00; 26/5/87]*

The next day the same sentence is quoted verbatim in the *Daily Telegraph*, but with an interesting extension to it:

*'But he said the example of Afghan guerillas demonstrated the point that massive military power could not subdue even primitively armed people intent on maintaining their independence.' [D.T.; 27/5/87]*

This is the first sign that the outline scripts are potentially unstable and are capable of alternative outcomes when given specific historical realisations. The *Daily Telegraph* on Friday features relatively extended quotation from a Thatcher speech, which may be understood as activating and blending selected historical realisations across a range of scripts in order to preserve the most favourable outline version.



*'She said it was absurd to argue, as Mr Kinnock had done, that the Afghan resistance had shown that military power could not subdue a people devoted to their liberty.*

*"Five million Afghans have fled; more than a million have been killed; the country has been ravaged; and Afghanistan is still occupied. So is Hungary; so is Czechoslovakia; so is Poland."*

The Afghanistan example is thus re-assimilated to the *POST-WAR OCCUPATION SCRIPT*. The speech then continues by activating the *WAR-TIME OCCUPATION SCRIPT*, again with specific historical realisations:

*"Europe was liberated from Nazi occupation not by its resistance movements, brave though they were, but by the Allied armies using most modern weapons".*

Thus, several components of scripts become salient; for instance, almost the whole of the *WAR-TIME OCCUPATION SCRIPT* surfaces in the last sentence.

*9.1.1 German forces occupy the territory of a weaker nation ["Nazi occupation"]*

*9.1.4 But the population engages in heroic if piecemeal resistance ["resistance movements"]*

*9.1.5 Allied forces liberate the territory [Europe was liberated .. by the Allied armies using most modern weapons"].*

The way, therefore, in which glosses develop from Kinnock's original comments on TVAM may be summarised as follows. Initially, the glosses invoke individual scripts in a partial and elliptical fashion. The presence of the scripts, however, is presupposed in the path that the glossings take. It is, at least, necessary to posit some such organisation of knowledge and background assumptions, in order to account for how "using all the resources you have got to make any occupation totally untenable" can come to be reformulated as, for example, "a policy of surrender". As the glosses develop, more of the scripts are made explicit. Although separable in principle, they become interwoven in practice so that their separate components not only interrelate within a discrete script but also overlap between one script and another. In this way, they apparently reinforce each other, and also reinforce crucial background assumptions - in particular the key background assumptions that

*The Soviet Union is a potential aggressor*

(derived from 1. and 2.) and that

*Conventional weapons do not deter the Soviet Union*

(see 5.1 above, derived from 4 + 5.).

Two important additional points need to be made about this process. Firstly, the scripts, once initially activated, become productive of the developing glosses. Not only do they shape the terms of the discourse within the political sphere; they also seem to provide frameworks for selection from the political process itself for representation the media. For example, many, if not all, of Thatcher's comments quoted here from the *Daily Telegraph* also figure in the daily TV news bulletins.

But, secondly, in all of this the underlying assumptions do not become the focus for debate. They remain precisely taken-for-granted, background assumptions.

#### 6.4 Transferring the Scripts

At the same time as these scripts and background assumptions are drawn upon to render Labour's policy "ludicrous", "absurd", "incredible", and "utter nonsense", some components of the scripts become transferred to other fields. Kinnock, for instance, does not engage directly with the responses to his interview until Tuesday. Labour's apparent reluctance to respond to the direction of glossing leads to accusations of evasion. These are framed in terms of *THE BULLY SCRIPT*. Tebbit's speech on Tuesday (see 27/5/87 - BBC1 2100; BBC2 Newsnight; On the Hustings; 28/5/87 BBC BT) contains the following segment:

*If only we could think that Mr Kinnock would show the same determination to face up to Britain's problems or our potential adversaries as he shows in his determination to run away from the Press*

*But from the safety of his carefully prepared and scripted television extravaganzas he just talks,*

*And he talks of a run-away victory,*

*But it is Mr Kinnock who's the run-away,*

*He's a run-away from the questioning Press,*

*He's a run-away from the questioning voters,*

*He's a run-away from the Trades Union bosses,*

*He's a run-away into the arms -*

*of his own extremists,*

*And he would be a run-away from any bully, however big or small, who threatened this nation.*

In this case a script that is primarily associated with the field of defence where its prime role is to justify a certain level of deterrence is transferred across to the sphere of personality. The role of *THE BULLY SCRIPT* is to emphasise the importance of facing up to a possible aggressor. As the Ministry of Defence pamphlet quoted earlier puts it:

*Many of us have had to stand up to a bully at some stage of our lives. The only answer is to say: "Let me alone - or you'll be sorry." And to have the strength to back up your words.*

*The situation is just the same between Russia and the West. Britain and NATO must have the strength to face up to the threat of Soviet military might. And that means Britain and NATO must have nuclear weapons.*

This runs *THE BULLY SCRIPT* in its positive form:

10.1 *If X has the strength to stand up to a bully, then the bully leaves X alone*

The negative form of this furnishes a complementary assumption commonly held in concert with the first:

10.2 *If X does not have the strength to stand up to a bully, then the bully does not leave X alone<sup>(1)</sup>*

Tebbit, in fact, runs the negative form of *THE BULLY SCRIPT*, with Kinnock filling the X-position in the script. By adopting the device of parallel structures, certain equivalences are established; and this helps to extend or transfer the script across a range of diverse issues. Kinnock's alleged inability to stand up to the press becomes one with his alleged inability to stand up to the Unions, becomes one with his alleged inability to stand up to extremists, becomes one with his alleged inability to stand up to the Russians. The point here, of course, is not merely to call defence proposals into question by



inscribing Kinnock into a clearly negative position in the script; but also to use the script in such a way that his capacities are simultaneously called into question across a wide range of fields or issues.

A similar kind of transference from one field across to another may be seen in Owen's remarks:

*He wants Dad's Army back and Captain Mainwaring's return to colours. Or does his confidence stem from his own extensive experience of fifth columnists in the Labour Party [Owen: Ind./D.T./BBCTV2100; 26/5/87]*

*The Independent* prefaced this comment in the following way:

*The SDP leader ridiculed Mr Kinnock's suggestion in a weekend interview that there was little point in the Soviet Union invading a non-nuclear Britain because an occupation would be totally untenable.*

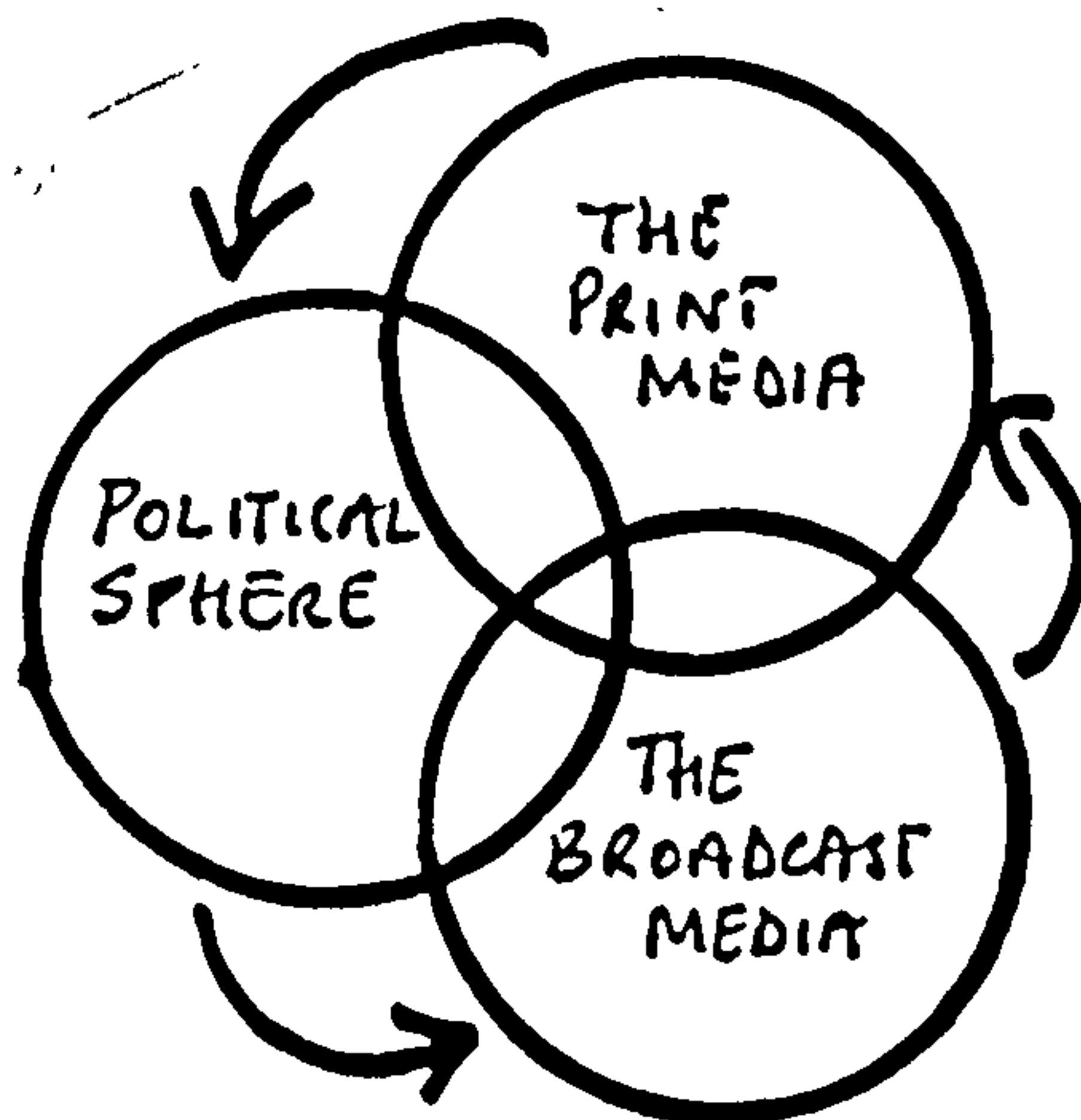
Owen's comment, therefore, takes off from *THE WAR-TIME OCCUPATION SCRIPT* but extends it from the defence issue to Labour's internal politics.

The potency of the initial scripts may thus be seen not only in the way they seem to secure wide coverage of material that conforms to the scripts across a range of discursive domains (popular press, quality press, TV news and radio), but also in their sheer flexibility - in the way they can be extended, adapted and transferred to organise fields other than the one in which they originate.

## 6.5 Dominant Scripts

The fact that certain key scripts emerge as dominant in the media during the second week of the campaign may be explained, in part, by close collaboration between Tory central office and those newspapers manifestly sympathetic to the Conservative cause. And it is interesting to note in this respect that it was only *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The*

*Daily Express* that carried the story of Kinnock's interview on the Monday. This was enough, however, to trigger more comment and speeches on the Monday, so that by Tuesday the story is well established across other sections of the press (*Neil Nuked* said *The Sun*) and, even more significantly, in the broadcast media. In effect, a small section of the press was able to set the agenda for other parts of the media. The domains of party politics, the press and broadcasting may thus be represented in terms of three overlapping circles, with the press on this occasion playing a crucial role:



At the same time, although these three institutional domains may well be seen as overlapping, this in itself is not sufficient to explain how certain material seems capable of coming to organise the discourse in all three domains simultaneously. In the last analysis, this is a discursive phenomenon, one which rests fundamentally on characteristics of the scripts themselves. Once these scripts surface in the glossings reported in *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Daily Express* on Monday morning, they become regulative or productive mechanisms in the composition of discourse, inasmuch as ensuing discourses are framed in ways that extend the presuppositions of an established scripts, until they seem to be played out. (There does, for example, seem to be some kind of natural life cycle for scripts on issues of public policy of between three and five days.). In effect, when a script wins dominance

within the media it works to exclude other material, unless this can be assimilated to the dominant script. On the basis of the scripts that have been outlined above, it is possible to suggest what might be the defining characteristics of dominant scripts.

(1) When more than one script is in play around a specific topic, they should be homologous, analogous and mutually reinforcing.

(2) They should at one and the same time both trade off common sense assumptions and crystallise them. As Lehnert (1980) comments: "when a script is shared by many people, that script can be referenced very efficiently." (p.86). In this way they may be seen as both sedimenting and sedimented forms of common sense.

(3) At the same time they should be capable of maximally organising diverse issues and flexible enough to transfer across from one kind of issue to another: from 'defence', for example, to 'leadership'.

(4) In the context of an election they should have a clear actantial role for one or other public figures (or parties) in the campaign. In the case of *THE BULLY SCRIPT*, for instance, it is mobilised in such a way that Kinnock is inscribed clearly into the actantial role of one who fails to stand up to bullies (a 'runaway')

(5) Finally, they should recruit to a clear position. Scripts take the form of an implicit appeal to those addressed by them, either to identify or disidentify with their projected outcomes because of their clearly desirable or undesirable nature. Thus, it is 'obvious', from the point of common sense, that the bullies *should* be vanquished; and just as obvious that Britain *should not* be occupied. The strength of these preferential identifications is enough to disguise what is less obvious: namely 'how to vanquish bullies when they're stronger than you are'; or 'whether other resources than nuclear weapons might be sufficient to thwart an occupying force'. It



← is noticeable in this respect that Kinnock's attempt to turn the script by mentioning the success of the Afghan guerillas (he could also have cited the humiliation of America by the Vietnamese) gains him little ground.

In general, I would argue that the way in which the forgoing scripts are deployed is part of a hegemonic process. They are aimed at, or addressed to, 'the voting public' or 'the people at large', and are oriented to mobilising and winning consent by operating on the terrain of common sense, reaffirming or reworking its contours. It is not just that they access strongly held assumptions. A key character role in the scripts is reserved for the nation itself - 'the British people'. One of the most pregnant glosses of all is that provided by Thatcher on the Friday of this second week.

*"He seemed to accept defeat, surrender, invasion, and occupation. The British people under a Labour Government would then have to rely on guerilla resistance to an enemy army of occupation.*

The gloss makes explicit that the appeal is to the voting public defined in terms of the highest level of generality - 'the British people' - at the point of maximum cohesion - when facing an external threat. Although this threat (and, indeed, one of the crucial scripts - **THE NUCLEAR BLACKMAIL SCRIPT**) is purely speculative and hypothetical, the generalising character of the implicit appeal goes some way to explaining its effectivity. Policy issues such as health, or education, or unemployment, (in terms of which Labour struggled to set the agenda) may be more concrete and particular; but their application is more restrictive inasmuch as they speak most directly to the concerns of the electorate defined in fragmentary terms of 'the sick', 'parents' or 'the unemployed' themselves. The hypostatized unity of 'the nation' may

indeed be spurious, requiring a hypothetical external threat to cover over its internal divisions<sup>1</sup>, but it brings together all sections of the electorate - no longer 'taxpayer', 'consumer', 'houseowner', 'teacher', 'nurse', 'housewife' etc. but 'the British people'. The appeal, therefore, is not purely 'economic-corporate' (to use Gramsci's term). The scripts set in play during this second week are not only dominant in the sense that they are the ones to prevail across several discursive domains. They are also 'national-popular' formation. And operating on the terrain of common sense, they seek vigorously to uncouple Labour from any place within this 'national-popular'. (See, "The British people under a Labour Government would then have to...")

In the last analysis, it is difficult to explain why else such scripts should dominate the news, especially since 'defence' itself as an issue connects so indirectly with the material interests of much of the electorate.

#### 6.6 A Visual Example of Script Condensation: the Sun Cartoon

To conclude this section on scripts it is instructive to examine an example of them at work at the end of the second week in a cartoon from *The Sun* (29/5). Here they are not so much implicated by verbal glossing but represented visually, using caricature figures instead of abstract entities.

**TEXT BOUND INTO**

**THE SPINE**



## WHEN THE RED ROSE URNS YELLOW

very heart of the  
election are these  
questions:

our win, how  
safeguard the  
of Britain?  
will they pre-  
peace?

if war should  
come, how will  
believe victory?

ave now moved  
last two weeks  
campaign.  
quite unbeliev-

**THE SUN** speaks  
its mind

able that, at this stage,  
we still do not know  
exactly how a party  
seeking to rule the  
country would carry  
out its first duty to  
protect the liberties  
and the lives of the  
people of these islands.  
We have reached this

Continued on Page Six

ONE  
MORE STEP  
AND I'LL  
SHOOT!



FRANKLIN



As Wareing (1988) points out, the cartoon is based upon an opposition between two figures, around which cluster a series of other oppositions. Thus:

KINNOCK : SOLDIER

SUPINE : STANDING

SMALL : LARGE

VERBAL : NON-VERBAL

LIGHTLY-ARMED (catapult+rose) : HEAVILY-ARMED (nuclear+conventional)

COWERING : MENACING

WEAK : STRONG

The cartoon may thus be seen as structured around a set of binary oppositions. (See Chapter 2, above). In addition, however, we can note that the two protagonists are configured in a particular way so as to suggest a moment in a series of actions. The Russian soldier's jackboot rests upon Kinnock's supine body so as to depict him crushing Kinnock underfoot. The hybrid weapon (nuclear tipped missile with machine gun belt attached) is pointing in the general direction of Kinnock. Kinnock himself is depicted in the act of aiming the catapult, loaded with Labour's rose, while he simultaneously issues a warning: "one more step and I'll shoot". As a moment of action, the cartoon both implicates prior events and predicts subsequent ones. In particular, Kinnock's warning ("one more step ..") helps us to read the soldier's posture as one of stepping onwards. Moreover, given the configuration of the figures, the leering smile of the soldier, and the assymetry in their weapons, it seems unlikely that he will be deterred by the warning.

The cartoon, therefore, condenses several moments in the scripts we have discussed above. In particular it represents in visual form most of *THE NUCLEAR BLACKMAIL SCRIPT*, especially steps 6.1 and 6.2 (by

implication), and also 6.3 and 6.6 (more explicitly), though with Kinnock/Labour inscribed into the position formerly held by Britain, and with a Russian soldier taking the place of the Soviet Union:

- 6.1 *Britain relinquishes nuclear weapons*
- 6.2 *(By doing so) Britain loses its deterrent*
- 6.3 *(Thus) Britain can not deter the Soviet Union (see 4, and 5, above)*
- 6.6 *The Soviet Union occupies Britain*

Also depicted are the following steps from the generalised **OCCUPATION SCRIPT** (again with the personalised figures substituted for the two types of nation):

- 8.1 *A strong nation occupies the territory of a weaker nation by force*
- 8.2 *The strong nation crushes overt resistance by the weaker nation*

The cartoon also gives concrete form to the following steps from the **POST WAR OCCUPATION SCRIPT**

- 9.2.1 *Russian forces occupy the territory of a weaker nation*
- 9.2.3 *Russian forces quell overt resistance*

Most fundamentally, of course, it provides a graphic illustration of the all-purpose **BULLY SCRIPT**

- 10.1 *If you are too weak to stand up to a bully they take advantage of you*

One script that is notably absent is the **WARTIME OCCUPATION SCRIPT**, which is excluded, because the invading/occupying forces in this script are German, whereas the soldier in the cartoon is wearing a Russian hat. However, it should be noted that both the **WARTIME** and the **POST-WAR OCCUPATION SCRIPTS** are closely parallel in form and on at least one occasion (see above: p.134) Thatcher blends one into the other:

*'She said it was absurd to argue, as Mr Kinnock had done, that the Afghan resistance had shown that military power could not subdue a people devoted to their liberty.*

*"Five million Afghans have fled; more than a million have been killed; the country has been ravaged; and Afghanistan is still occupied. So is Hungary; so is Czechoslovakia; so is Poland."*



"Europe was liberated from Nazi occupation not by its resistance movements, brave though they were, but by the Allied armies using most modern weapons".

There is a sense, therefore, in which the symmetry between the two scripts can be played upon so that each recalls the other; and it is clearly strategically useful to Thatcher to project some kind of equivalence between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, (so that within this regime of commonsense 'just as Nazi Germany was resisted, so must Soviet Russia be resisted')<sup>1</sup>. In the case of *The Sun* cartoon, the figure of the soldier is curiously ambiguous: he may look Russian from the waist up; but from the waist down he could easily be Nazi. Thus, even *THE WARTIME OCCUPATION SCRIPT* may be seen as vestigially present.

One possible counter-reading of the image would be to invoke a *DAVID & GOLIATH SCRIPT*, where the weak overcomes the strong, and it is interesting to consider ways in which this alternative script has been closed off as an avenue of interpretation. Although David overcomes Goliath with a shot from a sling (cp. Kinnock's catapult), this possibility seems to have been foreclosed in *The Sun* cartoon by the substitution of a rose for a stone and also by Kinnock's evident defeat, pinioned or crushed by the jackboot. Additionally, of course, the headline ("WHEN THE RED ROSE TURNS YELLOW") helps to fix a negative reading of Kinnock's role, further reducing the likelihood of a positive outcome for whatever script is set in play.

Coming as it does at the end of the second week of the campaign *The Sun* cartoon is a particularly concentrated summing up of the scripts that had been set in play some four days earlier, though now not as a gloss but as a visual metaphor in which Kinnock is to the Russians as

the weak are to the strong, as the lightly armed to the heavily armed, as the vanquished to the victor, and so on.

### *7.0 Metaphor and the Media's Representation of the Defence Debate*

Most of the glosses quoted and discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter are drawn from the discourse of political figures such as Cartwright, Heseltine, Younger, Owen, and Thatcher herself. As such, the glossing is performed more generally by the discourse of the politicians themselves than in the media's particular narration of the defence story. Basically, glossing goes on inside direct or indirect quotation of an attributed kind.

The only real exception to this is provided by newspaper headlines. We have already noted the headline from *The Daily Telegraph*

#### *GUERRILLA WAR A DETERRENT SAYS KINNOCK*

where the key phrase does not come directly from Kinnock's interview but from the glossing reported in the body of the story. A similar process is at work in the following headline from *The Star*

#### *NEIL IS NUKED: BIG GUNS SHOOT DOWN GUERRILLA DEFENCE PLAN*

Generally, however, the glosses are developed within forms of direct and indirect quotation.

It does not follow, of course, that the actual narrative construction of the debate about defence is lacking in interest. On the contrary, the media's presentation of the defence issue has one highly salient feature. It is broadly dependent - whatever the medium - on the frequent use of metaphors drawn from a narrowly circumscribed semantic field. The dominant metaphor for narration of the campaign is drawn from the sphere of *BATTLE* or *WAR* (hence 'tactics', 'strategy', 'attack',

'counter-attack', and of course 'campaign' itself). This is generally true, whatever the issue. But during the second week of the campaign, these metaphors are particularly prominent. The following consists of a fairly representative range:

1. "defence was the centrepiece of her attack on Labour and Neil Kinnock"  
[BBC1TV, 2100; 26/5]
2. "tonight in South Wales the Thatcher counter-attack began"  
[BBC1TV, 2100; 26/5]
3. "tonight the Alliance leaders kept up their attack on Labour"  
[BBC1TV, 2100; 26/5]
4. "Mrs Thatcher's all-out assault on Labour. What will Labour's facts be in reply?"  
[BBC2NEWSNIGHT, 26/5]
5. "Mrs Thatcher's attack was part of a two-pronged Conservative effort to halt Labour"  
[BBC2NEWSNIGHT, 26/5]
6. "The Labour Party mounted a determined rearguard action yesterday as the Conservatives and the SDP-Liberal Alliance focused on the defence issue"  
[FT; 27/5]
7. "The Conservative and Alliance pincer movement against Labour included a bitter assault by David Owen .. on Labour's defence policies"  
[IND; 26/5]
8. "Mrs Thatcher was first into the fray, turning guns on Mr Kinnock"  
[BBC1TV, BT; 26/5]
9. "Tonight .. the big guns were out"  
[BBC1TV, 2100; 26/5]
10. "as the first missile of the campaign landed, missing its target"  
[BBC1TV, 2100; 26/5]
11. "Norman Tebbit launched his own broadside on labour tonight"  
[BBC1TV, 2100; 26/5]
12. "Norman Tebbit tonight fired off a fusillade of accusations"  
[ITNTV, 2200; 26/5]
13. "The Tories deployed their two biggest guns tonight, Mrs Thatcher and Norman Tebbit, to blast away .."  
[BBC2NEWSNIGHT, 26/5]
11. "the barrage was directed almost solely against Labour"  
[BBC2NEWSNIGHT, 26/5]
12. "Mrs Thatcher came to Wales to deliver a salvo against Labour"  
[BBC2NEWSNIGHT, 26/5]
13. "Labour also came under renewed fire yesterday"  
[FT, 27/5]
14. "Labour leader Neil Kinnock yesterday had his ban-the-bomb policy blitzed by a young mother of two"  
[SUN, 27/5]
15. "NEIL IS NUKED: BIG GUNS SHOOT DOWN GUERILLA DEFENCE PLAN"  
[STAR, 26/5]

A noticeable feature about this range of metaphors is the close congruence which is established between the conduct of the campaign



and the articulation of the defence issue itself. The defence issue, after all, reduces at its simplest level in the media to an argument about appropriate weaponry; and yet it is precisely the weapon metaphor that is most commonly used to represent the public conduct of argument itself. Thus: ".. the first missile landed ..", "the big guns were out", "turning guns on Kinnock", "a fusillade of accusations", "a salvo against Labour", "under renewed fire", "policy blitzed", "Neil is nuked". There are two quite crucial dimensions to the way in which these metaphors operate.

Firstly, it is not uncommon in the articulation of any public issue for metaphors to surface which are somehow motivated by the issue in question. Thus, in the post-election debates about the plight of the health service, the metaphors were often drawn from the sphere of medical practice itself (cp. 'transfusions of cash', 'services cut to the bone', 'current policies are leeching the health service', 'it is like applying sticking plasters to sores'). From one point of view it would seem that the selection of a particular issue as newsworthy leads in consequence to the promotion of particular kinds of motivated metaphor, deemed to be apt and fitting because of some kind of perceived congruence between the issue itself and the metaphors through which it is articulated. In the case of defence it is worth posing the question of whether, in fact, the normal process was not reversed. For when the campaign itself is represented from the outset in terms of fisticuffs and artillery fire, attack and counter-attack, a semantic frame is already in place into which 'defence' as an issue fits with conspicuous ease.

Secondly, as part of the media's narration of the defence issue these metaphors play a somewhat disingenuous role. They construct the relationships of parties to each other in the campaign as if they were in direct combat with each other. This, of course, is not in fact the case. Unlike the Parliamentary process itself, there was hardly any moment during the campaign when spokespersons from the respective parties were in direct, face to face, confrontation (despite Kinnock's challenge to Thatcher to engage in television debate). Instead, the broadcast media and the press actually relay comments from one sector of the political domain (e.g. a speech or press conference) to another. The attack and counter-attack is thus not direct, but highly mediated. The 'exchanges', such as they are, the gloss and counter-gloss, come orchestrated within the terms of the media's own narration. In the discursive construction of this debate, however, the combat metaphors work to efface and displace the role of the media. At the very moment at which the media are active in the selective construction of the exchanges which constitute the campaign, these very exchanges are presented to the public as if they proceed independently of, and without the organising agency of, the media themselves.

### *8.0 Election Case Study: Conclusion*

Undoubtedly, it could be argued that Labour's defence policy in general, and Kinnock's gaffe in particular, cost them the election. It could further be argued that the media colluded (wittingly or unwittingly) in dramatising their difficulties. But these are not really the points I would wish to make. The case study was not intended as a study in electoral politics as such. Nor was it intended to be another re-run of the charge of media bias. I think the conclusions to be drawn are both more profound and more unsettling.

### 8.1 The Discourse of Politics and the Politics of Discourse

Unravelling the tangled skein that goes back to Kinnock's remark on TVAM lays bare the outline of a populist political discourse that is profoundly inimical to cherished beliefs on the Left. It is a populist discourse that trades off the fragmentary and contradictory claims both of common sense and folk history, but selectively organises them in such a way that they achieve an illusory solidity which becomes difficult to question. We all *know* that 'it was a good thing to resist the Nazis': (it was, of course, 'our finest hour'). We all *know* that 'the Soviet Union is still our greatest threat' (despite the fact that the nearest thing to recent infringements of 'our sovereignty' occurred when General Galtieri invaded the Falklands and U.S. forces invaded Grenada). We all *know* that 'it is better to be strong than weak' (despite the Sermon on the Mount). And all of this we know, because - in the end - we all *know* that 'it is a good thing to stand up to bullies'.

The scripts and 'ideo-logics' outlined in previous sections are powerful precisely because they not only trade off these sedimented background assumptions but also configure them into wider networks of supporting propositions, relating to them to each other either as a primitive argument or as a prototypical event sequence. Their most profound effect lies in the way they begin to limit the boundaries of the sayable. Utterances which activate the scripts are difficult to contest without seeming to challenge the very basis of common sense. Although Kinnock and other Labour figures attempt at various points in the second week to turn or deflect the glosses, with their associated scripts, onto more favourable ground, they conspicuously fail to displace defence as the main story of the week in most of the media. In



speeches on the Wednesday, for instance, Kinnock attempts to reverse the direction of *OCCUPATION SCRIPTS* in the following way:

*The Government .. has the gall to come before the British people and talk of 'surrender' and talk of 'white flags'.  
They have surrendered or given up our British industry.  
They have sold out and they have sabotaged our industrial effort in this country for eight years.*

He also seeks to revalue the 'runaway' accusation - the claim that he cannot face up to attack - and the whole strong/weak opposition

*They're attacking us because they're scared of us.  
They know we're a force to reckoned with ...  
The personal attacks that make me angry are actions,  
actions that inflict real personal hurt  
by depriving and depressing people who can't answer back;  
because they're not big and strong;  
because they're small and weak and poor.*

In each case, the strategy involves attempting to revalue a key term such as 'attack' or 'surrender' and inflect it in a different direction than it has enjoyed in the glosses - to 'welfare' on the one hand, and 'the economy' on the other. However, whilst the parallelisms give undoubted rhetorical shape to Kinnock's point, in neither example does the discourse lock into a prevalent, but alternative, script in a way which unsettles those that underpinned the glosses. The dominant scripts continue to prevail - working both to reproduce the defence issue, but even more significantly, to marginalise other issues.

At one level, the operation of scripts casts renewed light on the valuable concept of 'news values' as elaborated by Galtung and Ruge (1973). In their treatment items achieve the status of 'news' because of characteristics that seem to inhere in events themselves; and it is by

virtue of such immanent characteristics that events become 'newsworthy'. Thus, events that involve 'elite persons and nations', that are of restricted temporal duration, that achieve the requisite order of magnitude, that are unexpected, and so on, have ready claims to 'newsworthiness'. Galtung and Ruge's account provides an illuminating description of the scheme of relevance that governs the selection and inclusion of events in the news. Their account, however, pays insufficient attention to ways in which the events in themselves are discursive constructs and are discursively constructed for the news. The most important implication of the discussion of the defence issue developed above is that materials - in this case already existing in discursive form as glosses - are regulated and further shaped for inclusion in the news by underlying discursive mechanisms, amongst which scripts and metaphorical congruence are important components. In the last analysis, therefore, materials are 'newsworthy' to the extent that they may be assimilated to a prevailing order of discourse.

At a more fundamental level, however, the study of the defence issue shows how thoroughly Thatcherism has colonised significant sectors of commonsense and folk history, and co-opted them to its project. The scripts discussed above are only a few organised fragments from the diffuse, disjointed and episodic realm of common sense. Clearly there are many others. One thinks, for example, of the *HOUSEHOLD BUDGET SCRIPT* or the *WINTER OF DISCONTENT SCRIPT*. And it is rare to find counter-scripts that constitute any real embarrassment to this project. Perhaps one of the few examples, in script terms, to effectively enlist common sense against Thatcherism was the *SELLING OFF THE FAMILY SILVER SCRIPT*. But the study of the defence issue as it unfolds over one week in the media helps reveal a particular strategic organisation of the

stratified deposits of common sense. The scripts surface and prevail not necessarily because a biased media is intent on re-electing Thatcher in the hope that she'll line their pockets with 'loadsamoney'. The scripts work because they connect in powerful ways with the already-known and the already-said; they work because "when a script is shared by many people, that script can be referenced very efficiently"; they work in the last analysis because they trade off that very common sense shared by journalists, broadcasters, readers, voters, viewers - (1971) the common sense, which as Gramsci<sup>1</sup> said, "has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory" (p324). It is in this sense, by colonising common sense, that Thatcherism amounts to a hegemonic project; one which has effectively set limits to the sayable.

Gramsci, however, also commented that in the process of critical elaboration we need an inventory: "such an inventory must therefore be made at the outset" (p.324). This study of the defence issue may be seen as a small beginning to that inventory.



FOOTNOTES

- (1) The ideas in this chapter owe much to discussions in the Strathclyde Linguistics and Politics Group and in particular to Andrew Tolson and Greg Garton, who wrote other sections of the paper from which these sections were drawn. TV data was collected in the context of a research project funded by Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh, with transcripts prepared by Greg Garton.
- (2) The term was coined by Andrew Tolson: see Garton et al., 1988
- (3) The term is common in the cognitive science literature (see, e.g., Lehnert: 1976), although it is used here somewhat differently. See pp. 125 -127 below.
- (4) That common sense reasoning does work precisely to this effect is perfectly testable by the simple expedient of asking people the following question: 'what weapon(s) would most people consider most likely to deter a potential aggressor'? Despite possibilities ranging from tank-traps to nerve gas, I believe most people would answer: 'nuclear weapons'. I am less sure of the concrete steps implicated in this process. It is possible that on occasion collocational tendencies may be at work, so that 'deterrent' as a noun, for instance, now collocates almost exclusively with 'nuclear' as a premodifier. (See Chapter Three, pp. 88 -90, for fuller discussion of this point.)
- (5) Similarly, the outcome of commonsense reasoning in this case could be tested by the question: 'what nation would most people consider most likely to be a potential aggressor towards Britain?' I believe

most people would answer 'The Soviet Union/Russia'. It is noticeable in this case that collocation would provide a much less satisfactory explanation of the processes involved. (Written in 1988, this footnote would now seem to have been overtaken by events in Eastern Europe, and more particularly in the Soviet Union itself. This, however, only reinforces the point that ideologically sensitive scripts are not stable over time but are in constant need of maintenance and repair. It would be particularly interesting to review the ideological repair work that has gone into trying to maintain such a dominant and well-worked script since 1988)

- (6) The logical form of 10.1 does not, in fact, allow for the derivation of 10.2 by any kind of logical proof, such that - for example -  $\neg P \Rightarrow \neg Q$  is derived from  $P \Rightarrow Q$ . Indeed, deriving 10.2 from 10.1 can only be done by the logical fallacy of 'denying the antecedent'. This can be seen from the following example: it does not follow from the assumption "If Napoleon is French, then he is European" that "If Napoleon is not French, then he is not European". However, we are not dealing here with strict derivations according to logical form, but with the organisation of common sense assumptions.
- (7) See Hartley and Montgomery (1985) for comments on Manichean oppositions in the press
- (8) The account of metaphor was greatly helped by Lakoff & Johnson's general treatment in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980); see also Chilton (ed) (1985)

*CHAPTER FIVE*

*THEORIES OF IDEOLOGY AND DISCOURSE:*

*VOLOŠINOV & PÊCHEUX*

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The previous chapter began by raising issues about meaning, text and context and their relationship to issues of ideology. In particular, if meaning does not reside purely in the text but is a negotiated outcome of the interplay between text and context, it becomes difficult to insist that ideology reduces simply to textual effect. In this chapter I will follow through some of the consequences of this claim in the light of the case study on the defence issue. I will do so by discussing the respective claims of two theoretical accounts of the relationship of language and ideology as adumbrated in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, first published in Leningrad in 1929, and *Les Vérités de La Palice*, first published in Paris in 1975. The former work, ascribed to V.N. Volšinov, only became available in an English translation in 1973, whereas the latter work, written by M. Pêcheux, was published in English as *Language, Semantics and Ideology: stating the obvious* in 1982. Both texts share a common engagement with Marxism, although they emerge from very different social and historical circumstances and from very different intellectual milieux. Vološinov was closely identified with the Bakhtin school, which was centred on Leningrad and which played a significant role in debates between Formalism and Marxism during the 1920's and 1930's in post-revolutionary Soviet Union. There is even some doubt as to whether Vološinov himself is the actual author of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, some scholars (see, e.g. Clark and Holquist, 1984; Stewart, 1986) preferring to attribute the text to Bakhtin himself.<sup>(1)</sup> Pêcheux, on the other hand, was part of a circle of Marxist intellectuals in Paris confronting issues of ideology in the aftermath of the political ferment in France in May 1968. His major work, *Les Vérités de La Palice*, has acknowledged debts to the French Marxist philosopher, Althusser; and it is interesting to note that it

was published only two years after the emergence of Vološinov's work in the West - though there is no sign of any direct influence.

Despite the differing milieu from which each originates, both works are manifestly attempts to produce materialist theories of language and they bear many points of close comparison. Both see language as crucially implicated in the class struggle; both see ideology and language as closely connected, even inseparable; both reject the dichotomy between *langue* and *parole*; and both see the meaning of signs as inherently unstable.

### *1.0 Vološinov and the Multi-Accentuality of the Sign*

Volosinov's approach (1973) to the relationship of language to ideology is significant on a number of counts. On the one hand, it poses a challenge within an avowed Marxist framework to purely economic approaches to ideology, approaches which see it as the mere reflection of, or determined by, economic processes belonging to the base or infrastructure of society. On the other hand, Vološinov also takes issue with accounts of language that emphasise the abstract system - the code - at the expense of the actual implementation of the code in concrete situations of use. Instead, he stresses how language takes on its characteristics as system from its continual implementation in concrete situations. According to this view, language arises out of the process of social interaction; it takes form and shape on the terrain between speaker and hearer: "utterance .. is constructed between two socially organised persons" (p.85). "Word is a two sided act .. the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener." (p.86) "The organising centre of any utterance .. is .. in the social milieu surrounding the individual being." (p.93) In this way, by re-

positioning language firmly within socially determined processes of interaction, Vološinov removes it from the abstract and idealist sphere of (collective) consciousness and ties it back ultimately to the material basis; for it is this material basis which determines in the last instance that very 'social milieu' which becomes 'the organising centre' for any utterance: "production relations and the sociopolitical order shaped by those relations determine the full range of verbal contacts between people, all the forms and means of their verbal communication." (p.19)

At the same time, Vološinov treats language and ideology as, to all intents and purposes, strictly isomorphic: "the domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs. They equate with one another. Wherever a sign is present, ideology is present, too." (p.10) Arising as it does on interindividual territory, the word is inescapably the expression of ideology. In part, this is because "everything ideological possesses meaning." (p.9) And since meaning is rooted in the sign, it follows that "without signs there is no ideology." (p.9)

The most notable feature of this account - certainly the one which has attracted most attention - is the distinctive approach to meaning which Vološinov derives from these premisses. In particular, he takes exception to approaches (Vološinov gives Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* as his major example) which are predicated upon a notion of the linguistic sign as constituted by a stable and 'normatively identical' value. In contrast to this, Vološinov stresses that signs, as implemented in context, are invariably subject to an evaluative accent, which is the expression of the concrete, historical situation that engendered the utterance. Consequently, the meaning of a sign in one



particular contextualised utterance will not be equivalent to the meaning of that same sign in a different context. Meaning as a dynamic and variable process is thereby placed at the centre of Vološinov's argument, and marks his break with Saussurean linguistics. The direction of his argument is particularly clear in the following passage:

"Contexts of usage for one and the same word often contrast with each other. The classical instance of such contrasting contexts of usage for one and the same word is found in dialogue. In the alternating lines of a dialogue, the same word may figure in two mutually clashing contexts. .. Contexts do not stand side by side in a row, as if unaware of one another, but are in state of constant tension, or incessant interaction and conflict."

He then comments:

The change in a word's evaluative accent in different contexts is totally ignored by linguistics and has no reflection in its doctrine of the unity of meaning. .. Linguistics has thrown evaluative accent overboard along with the unique utterance (*parole*). [Vološinov, 1973: pp. 80-81]

Vološinov's critique of Saussure is accurate and persuasive. But writing in the 1920's in the Soviet Union, he was clearly in no position to anticipate developments in linguistics some 40 years later. In the event Vološinov's strictures against varieties of structuralist linguistics are reduplicated in some of the developments in linguistics and linguistic pragmatics over the last 10 - 15 years. As we noted above (p. 112), there has been sustained investigation of contextual determination of meaning and forms of contextual variation. In particular the emergence of sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and pragmatics can be seen as variously oriented to the recovery of *parole*. If these developments are taken into account, then the force - of some at least - of Vološinov's strictures is lost

### 1.1 'Multi-accentuality' and 'evaluative accent'

It might be argued, however, that Vološinov's notion of 'evaluative

accent' still captures an important residue of contextual variation not addressed by such developments. What, then, does the notion of 'evaluative accent' precisely entail? A clear answer to this question is difficult to supply since the notion remains persistently vague and ill-defined. At one point Vološinov claims it is registered through varieties of expressive intonation, citing in support a fictional example from Dostoevsky's *Diary of a Writer*. However, this is now a well-recognised phenomenon: and it would be mistaken to treat intonation as if it were some kind of accidental, non-linguistic adjustment device, working in an unsystematic fashion to infuse the sign with social meaning. Indeed, we now have sophisticated studies of the pragmatic and communicative value of intonation (see Brazil, 1985) which account for such perceptible adjustments in meaning by explaining them in terms the deployment of a fixed set of contrasts in pitch height and pitch direction, each of which has definable values. It works, therefore, in systematic and linguistically accountable ways. Indeed, unless some kind of system is involved it would be impossible to recognise that the 'evaluative accent' of an expression had shifted.

At other points in his account, Vološinov seems to equate 'evaluative accent' with 'ideological accent' as a way of pointing to social pressures on the sign, traversing it, and leaving their trace upon it, precisely because it is in the interactive domain of interpersonal relations that the sign arises. Ideological/evaluative accent is constituted by the social judgement or value that is enunciated in the sign. "No utterance can be put together without a value judgement," says Vološinov. "Every utterance is above all an *evaluative orientation*." (p.105) Inasmuch as these accents mould the meaning of the sign, Vološinov thereby stresses the indeterminacy at its core, rather than

some constant, irreducible and essential meaning. The 'multi-accentuality' of the sign thus follows from the dynamic and dialectical pressures set up by the possibilities of the evaluative accent. And because differently oriented accents, or social pressures, intersect in every ideological sign, the sign itself as the focus for a multiplicity of meanings "becomes an arena of the class struggle" (p.23).

Although this claim is suggestive, it is not completely original in itself. After all, it has long been recognised that many words or signs - even when considered in a decontextualised fashion as discrete elements of the abstract system or code - actually have several senses. And these will typically be listed, for example, in standard dictionary entries. (The Collins CoBuild English Dictionary [1987], for instance, lists twenty contemporary separate senses for the word *love*, some as a noun and some as a verb.) No current semantic theory within linguistics can afford to ignore this obvious fact. Only within structuralist linguistics of the 1920's might there have been strict insistence on the notion of "normatively identical form", or "stable self identity", or "self equivalent signal" as a comprehensive and sufficient account of meaning.

## 1.2 The distinction between 'meaning' and 'theme'.

And the paradox, of course, is that Vološinov has to retain some qualified notion of the stable identity of signs against the giddy vortex of absolutely unfettered polysemanticity; otherwise, if meaning was totally indeterminate and free-floating, there would be no basis for recognising different occurrences of 'the same sign'. Indeed, if all meaning reduced to the notion of evaluative accent, then every evaluative accent would, in effect, inaugurate yet another unique sign.



Vološinov steers past this difficulty by proposing a distinction between 'theme' and 'meaning'. Meaning is not so much a specific, stable content that signs possess; it is more in the nature of an abstract semantic potential that can only be actualised in utterance. "Meaning is the *lower limit* of linguistic significance. Meaning, in essence, means nothing; it only possesses potentiality - the possibility of having a meaning within a concrete theme. (p.101)". It needs to be completed by implementation in context, with the inevitable accompaniment of an evaluative accent, thereby producing the theme - in other words, the unique intention realised by an utterance on its specific occasion of use.

This is, perhaps, the most distinctive aspect of Vološinov's treatment inasmuch as he promotes 'theme' rather than 'meaning' to the centre of his account. Instead of marginalising theme as something accessory and accidental, he gives it pride of place. And this is more than a simple reversal of priorities, since - he insists - each dimension of meaning is implicated in the other. "No absolute, mechanistic boundary can be drawn between theme and meaning. There is no theme without meaning and no meaning without theme." (p.100) Indeed, meaning in effect is "the technical apparatus for the implementation of theme." (p.100) There is no doubt, however, which side of the dialectical opposition between theme and meaning is most important to Vološinov. Meaning as a technical apparatus may well facilitate theme but is constantly subject to evaluative pressure from the latter.

"Meaning is molded by evaluation. .. A change of meaning is, essentially, always a reevaluation .. [W]ith respect to changes in meaning, it is precisely evaluation that plays the crucial role. .. And that is how it happens that meaning - an abstract, self identical element - is subsumed under theme and torn apart by theme's living contradictions

so as to return in the shape of a new meaning with a fixity and self-identity only for the while, just as it had before." (pp. 105-6)

In some respects, Vološinov's proposals overlap with developments in linguistic pragmatics. His distinction between meaning and theme is admittedly analogous to the distinction widely current in pragmatics between 'what is said' and 'what is meant'. In both cases, the distinction can be seen as corresponding to 'coded significance' versus 'uncoded (but derivable from context) significance' (or, as Vološinov puts it, "the lower limit of linguistic significance" versus "the upper, actual limit of linguistic significance" [101]). Indeed, it may be further argued that some of the developments in pragmatics - in the study of presupposition and implicature, in the study of inferencing, speech acts and deixis, all of which depend upon context for their interpretation - have now superseded Vološinov's claims, or at the very least cast them in a new light.

Certainly, Vološinov's proposals lack the detailed specificity and rigour of this kind of work. It is noticeable, for example, in Vološinov's own account that - for all the centrality of the notion of multi-accentuality - he gives maybe only two examples of it at work. One of these, in any case, as we have seen, involves the rather dubious notion of expressive intonation. And, overall, absolutely no suggestion is provided concerning how to make multi-accentuality the focus of systematic study.

Nonetheless, his proposals do - in one important respect - go beyond those of pragmatics. Studies in contextual variation in meaning may well be advancing apace. But in the case of linguistic pragmatics recovering 'what is meant' from 'what is said' is understood as a

normative, rational, collaborative, endeavour, underwritten by - for example - *The Cooperative Principle* and its associated maxims (see Grice, 1975; Levinson, 1983; Leech, 1983). Within such an approach, therefore, the currents of conflict and contradiction that play around the sign are overlooked. Vološinov provides a timely reminder that contradiction cannot be ignored. As we have seen, for Vološinov, signs are multi-accentual because of the social contradictions that surround their use and which play through and across them.

Contexts do not stand side by side in a row, as if unaware of one another, but are in a state of constant tension, or incessant interaction and conflict. (p.80)

Thus, while many of his ideas seem at first sight compatible with current developments in linguistics and pragmatics (to the extent of informally anticipating them in a quite remarkable fashion<sup>(1)</sup>), the concept of multi-accentuality also provides an important critical lever. Indeed, it seems that on some occasions in real situations we can observe the cooperative principle being actively refused in the attempt to attribute certain meanings to a sign: and this almost in defiance of what that sign - from a different 'evaluative purview' - might be claimed to say.

### *1.3 Multi-accentuality and the study of the defence issue*

This is precisely the notion that informs the study of the defence issue undertaken in the previous chapter. Kinnock's original utterance is shifted from one evaluative purview to another. ("It took us a few hours to work out what he'd actually said", as 'the senior Tory' is quoted as remarking.) His utterance then becomes a "sign<sup>(2)</sup>" which is the site of class struggle", in which a particular range of strategically chosen evaluative accents is placed upon it.



The case study of the defence issue during the election campaign may thus be seen as an attempt to develop just such a systematic approach. By drawing on some quite detailed findings from pragmatics, it gives precise form and content to Vološinov's programmatic proposals. And this, it must be emphasised, is in no way a mere analytic exercise, designed to display a rebarbative terminology. On the contrary, it is intended to illustrate the first steps to be taken in specifying the salient constituents of a particular evaluative purview, together with its formal arrangement, in terms of its practical implementation at a specific historical moment.

## *2.0 Residual problems with Vološinov*

The proposals contained in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* may thus be seen as a theoretical backdrop - one which informs some aspects of the study of the defence issue, but which is also illuminated by it. At the same time, several crucial problems remain unresolved:

### *(1) The problem of determination/articulation:*

(a) How exactly is the sphere of language related to the sphere of ideology? Is there no ideology outside language and is all language therefore ideological? If so, do we need the category of ideology at all?

(b) What is the relation of the class struggle to multi-accentuality? Given Vološinov's disclaimers about 'reflection', what exactly is the relation between contradiction at the level of social relations and the struggle over the sign? If multi-accentuality is the expression of social contradiction, does this imply that social relations are somehow anterior to language? And, in any case, can all social contradiction be reduced to an epiphenomenon of the class struggle?

(2) *The problem of appropriation*

Given that ideology is instantiated in the sign, by what mechanisms are ideological accents appropriated by users of signs? How do such accents inform and shape the subjectivity of sign-users? Do sign-users all identify with available ideological accents in uniform and predictable ways?

(3) *The problem of analysis*

Given that utterances inevitably enact particular ideological positions, how do we reveal analytically the specific character of those ideologies? What kinds of analytic moves are most relevant to uncovering ideology at work? What areas of the linguistic system are most sensitive to evaluative accent; or should the problem be addressed at a different level than the system itself? And, more fundamentally of course, if all language is ideology, how is it possible to stand outside ideology in order to criticise it?

With these residual difficulties in mind it is worth considering the work of M. Pêcheux, since behind superficial differences in terminology and idiom it does address similar issues. One striking point of correspondence is a similar attack on notions of the stable sign, especially as attributed to Saussure.

*3.0 Pêcheux and the instability of the sign*

Pêcheux asserts the primacy of the signifier over sign and meaning: "the signifier which is not the sign, and as such has no meaning, determines the constitution of the sign and of meaning." (1982, p.188) More specifically, "a word, expression or proposition does not have a meaning of its own, a meaning attached to its literality ... Meaning is always a word, expression, or proposition for another word, another expression, or another proposition." (1982; p.188) This amounts to the assertion that all meaning is in some sense metaphorical; and metaphor

in this view certainly provides something of a limiting case. Habitually we express one kind of 'reality' in terms of another: using "overheating", for example, to talk on the one hand of the behaviour of a car's engine and on the other hand of 'an uncontrolled increase in domestic demand, coupled with wage inflation'. Meaning, then, for Pêcheux does not reside in a pre-determined way in properties of the *langue* (for example, the interrelationships of the lexicon or the syntax). In fact,

"meaning does not exist anywhere except in the metaphorical relationships (realised in substitution effects, paraphrases, synonym formations) which happen to be more or less provisionally located in a given discursive formation: words, expressions, and propositions get their meanings from the discursive formation to which they belong." (1982; p. 188)

This is similar to the challenge posed by Vološinov to the 'self identity' of the sign; except that, whereas Vološinov stresses the role of extra-linguistic context in generating multi-accentuality, Pêcheux emphasises the role of discursive process itself.

#### *4.0 Pêcheux and the dichotomy between langue and parole*

Pêcheux takes strong issue with the Saussurean dichotomy between *langue* and *parole*, by arguing that the opposition is used to constitute the object of linguistic study in an unnecessarily limited way so that language as system becomes the focus of concern, to the exclusion of issues of rhetoric, poetics, politics, and ideology. Linguistics in the Saussurean tradition thus retreats "behind the break which inaugurated it." (1982; 174). This is a familiar criticism also to be found, amongst others, in Firth (1957), Hymes (1972) and Halliday (1972), as well as in Vološinov's strictures on abstract objectivism. ("The actual reality of language-speech," as Vološinov puts it, "is not the abstract system of linguistic forms .. but the social event of verbal interaction



implemented in an utterance or utterances." [Vološinov: 1973, p.94]). In similar fashion to these, Pêcheux rejects Saussure's way of posing the opposition and reintroduces the discarded areas of parole by way of a different pair of categories, *linguistic basis* and *discursive process*.

To some extent, even when recasting the distinction, Pêcheux seems to accept much that is implied in the traditional definition of *langue*.

"I want first of all to stress .. that every linguistic system, as a set of phonological, morphological and syntactic structures, is endowed with a relative autonomy that makes it subject to internal laws which constitute, precisely, the object of linguistics." (p.58)

But he radically re-conceptualises the domain of parole by articulating it in terms of discursivity or discursive process.

"Discursivity is not parole, i.e. it is not a 'concrete', individual way of inhabiting the 'abstraction' of the langue." (p.58)

Discursivity may, admittedly, be predicated upon *langue* "which is the indispensable prerequisite of any discursive process" (p.58), since "it is on the basis of these internal laws (of *langue*) that discursive processes develop." (p.58) At the same time, however, although language - the relatively autonomous linguistic basis (*langue*) - may be indifferent to the class struggle, discursivity is decidedly not, because "every discursive process is inscribed into an ideological class relationship." (p.59). This is the crux of the matter for Pêcheux; and his claim here matches closely Vološinov's assertion that "every sign is subject to the criteria of ideological evaluation" (1973; p.10), so that as a result "sign becomes an arena of the class struggle" (1973; p. 23). Indeed, Pêcheux's notion of 'relatively autonomous internal laws constituting the linguistic basis' versus 'ideologically informed and differentiated discursive processes', which are predicated upon that basis, but distinct from it, seems close in spirit to Vološinov's

distinction between *meaning* and *theme*, whereby meaning as the lower limit of linguistic significance - an abstract self-identical element - "is subsumed under theme and torn apart by theme's living contradictions so as to return in the shape of a new fixity and self-identity only for a while, just as it had before." (1973; p.106)

However, important differences emerge in the way these two similar sets of distinctions are developed. For Vološinov, the distinction leads him in a fairly direct route back into the social process in terms of the determining power of extra-verbal contexts, "which are in a state of constant tension, or incessant interaction and conflict" (1973; p.80). For Pêcheux, on the other hand, the distinction leads him from discursivity, to discursive formation, to ideological formation.

### *5.0 Ideological formation, discursive formation, and interdiscourse*

Pêcheux adopts broadly an Althusserian framework for conceptualising ideology and its role in the social formation (see Althusser, 1971). Within this framework, institutions such as the Church, the School, the Family, the Media, and so on, provide specialised spheres for ideology to operate within: they constitute, in effect, 'Ideological State Apparatuses'. At the same time, the ground on which Ideology operates is the class struggle, its overall role being to reproduce the relations of production. This it does by constructing for individuals representations of their imaginary relationship to the real conditions of existence, representations which confirm them in their positions of dominance or subordination. The differentiation of state apparatuses and the contradictory tensions between real conditions of existence and imaginary relationships give rise, not to a unitary and homogeneous Ideology, but to competing ideological formations. However, even though

the relationship between ideological formations is characterised by unevenness and contradiction, they comprise in total, when taken together, a complex whole in dominance.

In Pêcheux's account, ideological formations are matched by corresponding discursive formations, one plane (discourse) being 'imbricated' in the other (ideology). And in the same way that the ideological plane constitutes in its totality a 'complex whole in dominance', just so with the discursive plane: the separated discursive formations constitute together a similar 'complex whole in dominance'. Pêcheux terms the interrelationship of these contradictorily disposed discursive formations in a structured totality *interdiscourse*. Each discursive formation thus exists in a concealed dependency on the whole.

At first sight, articulating discourse to ideology in this way seems to have the merit of opening up the study of ideology to more concrete and particular modes of analysis. If discourse instantiates or enunciates ideology then the latter is made tangible and present to study in particularly practicable ways. However, a serious difficulty troubles Pêcheux's account. He is unable to be specific about the nature of the relationship between ideological formations and discursive formations. At moments he seems to suggest that ideological formations provide principles of coherence that underpin the intelligibility of their corresponding discursive formations; but the relationship of one to another remains persistently vague. Indeed, he somewhat disingenuously remarks in a footnote:

I shall not settle here the problem of the of the *nature* of this correspondence. Let me just say that it cannot be a matter of pure equivalence (ideology = discourse), nor of a mere distribution of functions ('discursive practice'/'non-



discursive practice'). It would be more appropriate to speak of an 'imbrication' of the discursive formations into the ideological formations.

But the notion of 'imbrication' (i.e. 'layered into' ?<sup>(1)</sup>) adds nothing of substance to the account. Quite the contrary: it suggests merely an uneven correspondence of an unspecifiable kind.<sup>(2)</sup>

It is also the case, however, that discursive formations themselves remain ill-defined. It is not clear whether they are best understood in terms of institutional provenance (e.g. 'the discourse of the defence establishment') or topical scope (e.g. 'the discourse of deterrence'). Nor, crucially, is it clear at what level of abstraction from actual utterances they should be recognised as operating. And since no hint is given as to how the boundaries of any discursive formation may be determined, it is difficult to see how the substantive constituents of any particular discursive formation can be specified in practice. Thus, a major putative gain in the delineation of ideologies in concrete situations is thrown away.

#### *6.0 Discursive formation, discursive process, and intradiscourse*

In fairness to Pêcheux it must be recognised that what he offers (in *Language, Semantics and Ideology*) is a formal account of discursive processes both within discourses and between one discourse and another, rather than a substantive account of particular ideologies and discursive formations in a concrete, situated fashion. Indeed, the description and exemplification of these processes forms the centrepiece of his account, as may be evident from the following definition of discursive formation:

I shall call a discursive formation that which in a given ideological formation, i.e., from a given position in a given conjuncture determined by the state of the class

struggle, determines 'what can and should be said' (articulated in the form of a speech, a sermon, a pamphlet, a report, a programme, etc.). (p. 111)

According to this definition, discursive formation seems best understood as a set of regulative principles that underly actual discourses but remain separate from them. Pêcheux then continues:

This amounts to saying that words, expressions, propositions, etc., obtain their meaning from the discursive formation in which they are produced... [A] word, expression or proposition does not have a meaning 'of its own' attached to it in its literalness; its meaning is constituted in each discursive formation, in the relationships into which one word, expression or proposition enters with other words, expressions or propositions of the same discursive formation. (pp. 111-112)

Meaning, thus, is a function, not of particular words or wordings, but rather of the discursive formation in which such expressions occur. It does not follow, however, that meaning is purely accidental and contingent. Although variable, certain generalised and stable mechanisms or processes may be seen as underlying this productivity. These consist of a "system of relationships of substitution, paraphrases, synonymies, etc., which operate between linguistic elements - 'signifiers' - in a given discursive formation", to which Pêcheux gives the term *discursive process*.

These processes secure the play of meaning within particular discursive formations, so that any instance of enunciated discourse has its intelligibility guaranteed in part by their operation. In this sense their domain of operation is the syntagmatic chain of discourse - a plane of relationships that Pêcheux refers to as *intradiscourse*. At the same time, however, and in addition to meaning effects produced along the horizontal plane of discourse, Pêcheux also notes how intradiscursive relationships may be impinged upon, and affected, by

discourse from elsewhere - from somewhere within the complex whole in dominance of discursive formations; in other words, from *interdiscourse*. Thus, at particular crucial points in the plane of intradiscourse, elements from interdiscourse may erupt as preconstructed elements or lateral reminders of material established in another discursive formation. In this way, one 'line' or 'plane' of discourse may intersect with another, providing tacit support from elsewhere in interdiscourse to an intradiscursive enunciation. When the intelligibility of an intradiscourse leans for support on its intersection with pre-established discursive material from interdiscourse, Pêcheux terms this phenomenon *transverse discourse*. There are two mechanisms in particular that are heavily implicated, according to Pêcheux, in the operation of transverse discourse, viz. *determinative* and *explicative* relative clauses. As grammatical constructions (they correspond to the distinction in grammatical description between defining and non-defining relative clauses) these could be seen as part of what Pêcheux has described as the linguistic basis. They provide him, however, with instructive examples of the way in which "on the basis of these internal laws (of langue) .. discursive processes develop." For both kinds of construction provide points where intradiscourse is susceptible to the workings of transverse discourse: in other words, each construction in its own way allows material to infiltrate by means of transverse discourse into the enunciated intradiscourse. This can be seen more clearly by example.

#### 6.1 Explicative (non-defining) relative clauses as discursive process

The following sentence includes an explicative relative clause:

Napoleon, who recognised the danger to his right flank,  
himself led his guards against the enemy position



Each clause of the sentence may be seen as corresponding to a separate proposition, viz.:

(1) *Napoleon led his guards against the enemy position*

(2) *Napoleon recognised the danger to his right flank*

A purely grammatical approach to the sentence would claim that the relative clause here merely explicates or adds information in a contingent fashion about some element of the main clause (see, for example, Sinclair; 1971). Thus, the relative clause here adds information about the referent 'Napoleon' of the main clause. Pêcheux, however, argues that the information (or the proposition) of the subordinate clause is not in this case of a purely accessory or contingent nature. On the contrary, articulating the two propositions together through the use of an explicative has, in this case, the effect of implying a causal relationship between the two, such that:

*Napoleon led his guards against the enemy position because he recognised the danger to his right flank*

Indeed, the subordinate clause (who recognised the danger to his right flank) does, in this reading, express more through its connection with the main clause than it would in isolation. For the causal relationship to be activated, however, requires the recognition of some general background assumption, such as:

*If (being a general, or being Napoleon) one recognises a danger threatening, one must oneself lead the attack to ward it off.*

Explicative clauses, therefore, act as lateral reminders, prompting in Pêcheux's terms a kind of 'return of the known in thought'. In this illustration above it might be argued that a discourse of motives and intentions (from somewhere in interdiscourse) intersects with a discourse of pure historical narration.

## 6.2 Determinative (defining) relative clauses as discursive process

The following sentence may serve to illustrate the workings of a determinative relative clause:

He who first discovered the elliptical orbit of the planets died in misery.

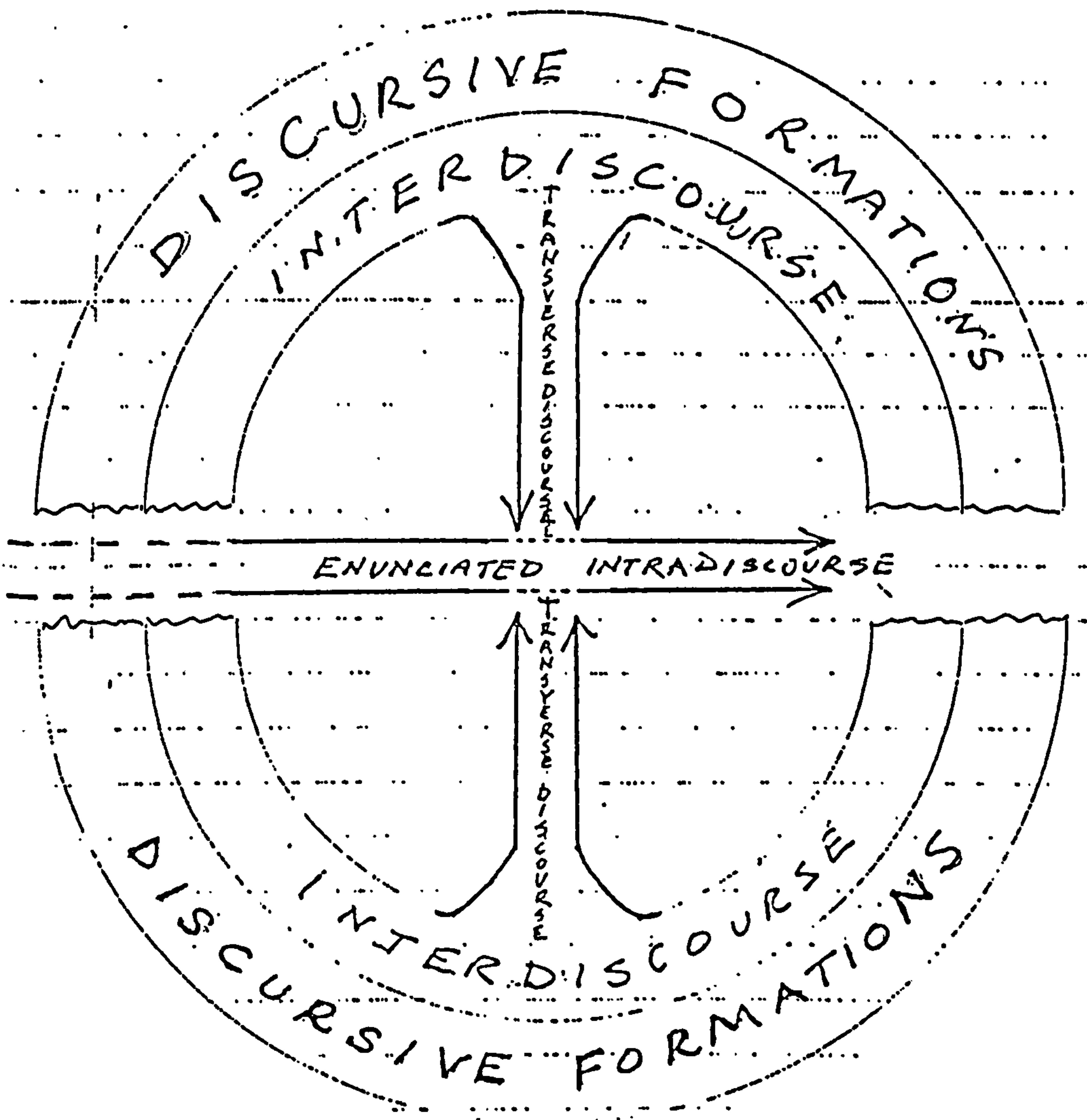
The relative clause in this example does not so much add information about the referent of a constituent in the main clause but actually determines, restricts or defines who that referent is. Defining relative clauses, in fact, typically constitute part of the constituent itself, rather than being in a weaker appositional relationship to it. Pêcheux claims that this form of embedding allows for the insertion into intradiscourse of elements preconstructed elsewhere. More particularly, he claims that in the example given above the discourse of scientific history erupts in a preconstructed fashion into the discourse of personal biography. Certainly, it is reasonable to claim that constructions of this type present a logically necessary entailment ('*someone discovered the elliptical orbit of the planets*') as part of a syntactic nominalisation rather than as an independently asserted, and therefore more easily contested, proposition. Accordingly, the 'preconstructed' surfaces as an 'always-already-there', in which some segment of reality is invoked as if already given in a preconstituted 'world-of-things-as-they-are'.

## 6.3 The sustaining effect of transverse discourse

These linguistic constructions are from one perspective, by virtue of the grammatical constraints which govern their operation, located in the linguistic basis. At the same time, however, when implemented in any intradiscursive enunciation they open up spaces for the operation of

transverse discourse, so that the latter sustains the former, supplying by a process of implication supportive connections between the propositions of intradiscourse. Inasmuch as explicatives and determinatives are susceptible to the lines of force running along transverse discourse from interdiscourse, they are from this altered perspective never less than *discursive processes*. The fundamental parameters of Pêcheux's account of discursivity and discursive process may thus be summed up diagrammatically as follows:

Fig. 1





Summary of Terms

**INTRADISCOURSE:** realised by substitution effects, paraphrases, synonym formations, and actualised in enunciation

**TRANSVERSE DISCOURSE:** the provision of sustaining effects from the domain of interdiscourse to support relations of implication in an enunciated intradiscourse

**INTERDISCOURSE:** the complex whole in dominance of discursive formations, configured not as a homogeneous whole, but in relations of unevenness and contradiction. Interdiscourse intervenes in intradiscourse by means of transverse discourse, but never as a global entity, since it is fundamentally marked by 'the law of non-connexity'.

*7.0 Residual problems with Pêcheux*

There are several points that are unclear in Pêcheux's account of ideology and discursive processes.

*7.1 Why does the relative clause play such an important role in Pêcheux's account?*

It would seem that, for Pêcheux, the relative clause is important because it can be used to illustrate how a detailed description of the grammar of such constructions cannot in itself account for how discursive relations of implication can be set up between main and subordinate clauses. Interpretation of these relations involves a discursive process that leads beyond coded elements of the sentence into surrounding discursive formations and hence into the sphere of ideology. For Pêcheux, the discursive relations that an interpreter comes to recognise as connecting a relative clause with its main clause draw upon what we know already from elsewhere in a taken-for-granted

fashion: so that for an interpreter to recognise an uncoded relationship amounts to a confirmation or ratification of the already-known.

But it is not clear from Pêcheux's account if he is claiming that all instances of relative clauses do actually support an ideological inference. Admittedly, a strong case may be developed for those relative clauses of the explicative type where the relationship between the main and subordinate clause seems motivated rather than contingent, as in the example discussed above (p.60):

Napoleon, who recognised the danger to his right flank, himself led his guards against the enemy position.

In some cases, however, the relationship between main and subordinate clause seems of a much more accidental and contingent nature:

Napoleon, who had brown eyes, himself led his guards against the enemy position

It is not easy, in cases such as this, to find any ideologically loaded inference that will support an implied relation between the two clauses other than a purely contingent one. If this is so, then not all relative clauses are susceptible to the ideological work of transverse discourse.

Furthermore, relative clauses in themselves do not constitute a particularly common feature of actual text. In a feature article chosen at random from the Sunday Times, only 14 relative clauses can be identified from the first forty consecutive sentences. Of these, only four are clearly cases of explicative clauses - the type most strongly associated by Pêcheux with discursive processes involving ideological implication. And yet, if discursive processes are exclusively tied to relative clauses (as they seem to be in Pêcheux), then only thirteen sentences out of forty in the sample text offer a formal basis for

discursive effects of an ideological kind. The focus on relative clauses seems, in consequence, to be extremely limiting.

Furthermore, when the text is examined for instances of the kind of discursive effect associated by Pêcheux with relative clauses, it is possible to find other constructions which work in a similar fashion to both explicatives and determinatives. For example, there are many cases of appositional phrases which closely simulate the role of explicative relative clauses. Indeed, these phrases can with little difficulty be transformed into explicatives as in the following examples:

Ex. 1: "Marcia Falkender, his [i.e. Wilson's] private secretary, talked about the clothes she would need to take to prison..."

Ex. 1.1: *Marcia Falkender, who was his private secretary, talked about the clothes she would need to take to prison.."*

Ex. 2: "Wilson, once so garrulous about MI5, will no longer discuss it.."

Ex. 2.1 *Wilson, who was once so garrulous about MI5, will no longer discuss it..*

Ex. 3: "But Barbara Castle, then a cabinet minister, said last week that he [i.e. Wilson] had been incensed by the smear campaign."

Ex. 3.1: *But Barbara Castle, who was then a cabinet minister, said last week that he had been incensed by the smear campaign.*

In these examples (Ex.'s 1, 2 & 3) the appositional phrase amounts to an elliptical or truncated explicative relative clause; and their role matches closely that suggested by Pêcheux for explicatives - they seem to function as 'lateral reminders', constituting a kind of 'return of the known in thought'. In at least one case (Ex.2), the appositional phrase seems to serve as a prompt for a proposition, nowhere overtly expressed in the text, that would supply a causal link between Wilson's onetime garrulity and his present reticence. Indeed, there are some ten



instances of this kind of construction as opposed to only four clear instances of full explicative relative clauses.

Similarly, in the case of the determinative relative clause, other types of structure seem capable of performing the same discursive role. Syntactically, determinative relative clauses act as 'rank-shifted', or embedded clauses, post-qualifying the head word in a nominal group (or 'noun phrase'). In the following sentence, for example, the first nominal group (the boy) may be modified or qualified in various ways:

Ex. 4: The boy was riding a red bike

Let us assume, for instance, that the particular boy in question was wearing a black jacket: it is possible for this detail to be expressed in various ways:

- Ex. 4.1 The boy who was wearing a black jacket rode a red bike
- Ex. 4.2 The boy wearing a black jacket rode a red bike
- Ex. 4.3 The boy in a black jacket rode a red bike
- Ex. 4.4 The black-jacketed boy rode a red bike

These examples are virtually synonymous, even though the structures vary from determinative relative clause, to non-finite clause (wearing a black jacket), to prepositional group (in a black jacket). It is not easy to see on what discursive grounds a defining/determinative relative clause acting as a qualifier in a nominal group can be distinguished from a prepositional phrase likewise acting as the qualifier in nominal group: Ex.4.3, for instance, could easily be seen as an elliptical form of Ex.4.1.

All of these could, I would claim, be seen as alternative, related grammatical realisations of Pêcheux's 'preconstructed', all of which depend upon a process of reduction from a finite clause. There may well be other equally important realisations of the 'preconstructed'. Kress

and associates (Kress, 1983; Kress and Hodge, 1979; Fowler et al, 1979), for example, devote much attention to instances of *nominalisation* in news text. This may be seen as an extreme case of grammatical reduction inasmuch as nominals, such as "negotiations" or "management", are derived, in their account, from underlying predicate structures built around a verb. Thus, an example such as

Ex.5: "Negotiations took place at ACAS"

is treated by them as if derived from an underlying structure such as the following:

Ex.5.1: X negotiated with Y at ACAS

where the verb ('negotiate') functions as a two place predicate in an underlying clause in which the associated participant roles (X and Y) require specification for the clause to be structurally complete - as in, for example,

Ex.5.2: "The miners negotiated with the Coal Board at ACAS"

According to Kress, when a structure such as this is nominalised (e.g.: 'negotiations'), one important consequence is that the participant roles (e.g.: 'miners' and 'the Coal Board') may easily be deleted (as in Ex.5), where the grammatical process of reduction leads to a reification and objectification of the underlying process.

Inasmuch as the process is truly one of objectification, where an action represented by a verb becomes rendered 'thing-like' by nominalisation, then it bears some comparison with Pêcheux's account of the 'preconstructed', in which entities (e.g.: 'he who saved the world by dying on the Cross') assume existential solidity, even where their existence is denied elsewhere in the same enunciation (e.g.: 'he who saved the world by dying on the Cross does not exist')

Crucially at stake here is the degree to which a discursive effect stands in a one-to-one relationship with a grammatical process. A fundamental premise of discourse studies as they have developed over the last fifteen years is that no simple correlation is to be expected between grammatical (sub-sentential) processes and discursive processes: it is not possible, in other words, to read off discursive effects from sentential structures in any direct, one-to-one fashion. The same discursive effect may be achieved by a variety of grammatical realisations. Although Pêcheux rightly argues for a separation of the two domains of grammar and discourse (in his terms 'linguistic basis' and 'discursive process') he fails to follow through the full logic of his argument, which is inhibited by his tendency to work from grammar to discourse, in line with his principle that discursive processes develop 'on the basis of these internal laws' (p.58). Pêcheux does, admittedly, raise the important issue of how ideological considerations may underpin discursive processes. But a more radical step, reflecting more fully the consequences of his position, would entail working from discursive processes as such, conceived in a more autonomous fashion, and noting the range of grammatical processes that potentially may be associated with them. Otherwise we are left with an extremely one dimensional view of discursive process that pivots exclusively round the relative clause.

7.2 How are discursive formations identified and what is their relationship to one another?

Discursive formations are particular orders of discourse, each imbricated within an ideological formation, which secure the meaning of particular words, expressions and propositions. A discursive formation is that which



"in a given ideological formation, i.e. from a given position in a given conjuncture determined by the state of the class struggle, determines what can and should be said (articulated in the form of a speech, a sermon, a pamphlet, a report, a programme, etc.)."

(p. 111)

Unfortunately, since no particular discursive formation is discussed in concrete terms, there is much ambiguity in Pêcheux as to whether these amount to class based fashions of speaking (e.g. codes, social dialects, antilanguages, etc.), officially ratified or institutionalised fields of discourse defined by topic (e.g. 'scientific discourses', 'medical discourses', 'legal-juridical discourses', etc.), or generic forms of discourse ('jokes', 'anecdotes', 'speeches', 'sermons' etc.). A recent account of 'discourses' (see Fiske, 1987) attempts to resolve this kind of ambiguity in the following way:

Any account of a discourse or a discursive practice must include its topic area, its social origin, and its ideological work: we should not, therefore, think about a discourse of economics, or of gender, but of a capitalist (or socialist) discourse of economics, or the patriarchal (or feminist) discourse of gender. Such discourses frequently become institutionalised, particularly by the media industries, in so far as they are structured by a socially produced set of conventions that are tacitly accepted by both industry and consumers. In this sense we can talk about the discourse of the news, or of advertising: these discourses still exhibit our three defining characteristics - a topic area, a social location, and the promotion of the interests of a particular social group. (Fiske, 1987: pp. 14-15)

The solution proposed by Fiske, however, conflates several different and contradictory levels of abstraction and merely insists by assertion on the existence of those very discourses it should be at pains to define.

In Pêcheux's account this problem of definition leads to particular difficulties when exploring the role of transverse discourse. The sustaining effect which he attributes to this kind of discourse is predicated upon the intersection of one kind of discursive formation

with another. This effect, however, is difficult to demonstrate without clear criteria for distinguishing one kind of discursive formation from another. And in practice, it seems quite possible for a sustaining effect to be achieved without insisting upon the background presence of a rival discursive formation. For example, in the Sunday Times article referred to above, it would seem that one recurrent use of explicative relative clauses (or appositional constructions of an associated type) involves the juxtaposition of one temporal state of affairs with another, as may be seen in the following examples:

Ex. 8: "Wright, whom they [his former colleagues] now despise, was one of their most trusted officers."

Ex. 9: "Wilson, once so garrulous about MI5, will no longer discuss it.."

Ex. 10: "But Barbara Castle, then a cabinet minister, said last week that he [i.e. Wilson] had been incensed by the smear campaign."

This kind of juxtaposition does, following Pêcheux's argument, create, as it were, an intradiscursive implicational space which can be filled in various ways. In Ex.8, for instance, the contrast between present contempt and past trust casts some doubt on the reliability of the judgements exercised by Wright's former colleagues. In Ex. 9 the contrast between Wilson's former garrulosity on the subject of MI5 and his present taciturnity suggests some unstated intervening event which causes the change in attitude. In neither case, however, do the possible implications seem to derive necessarily from a rival discursive formation. On the contrary, it is quite possible to argue that they issue from within the very discursive formation upon which the text is predicated. Thus it seems that transverse discourse, especially when discursive formations themselves are designated in arbitrary terms according to shifting criteria, is not necessarily dependent upon a rival discursive formation to fill the spaces of intradiscourse.

In conclusion, therefore, I would argue that Pêcheux's account needs developing in two crucial respects: (1) if the notion of discursive formation is necessary to a theory of language and ideology, then it requires more rigorous definition for it to become applicable in concrete study; (2) the notion of discursive process needs to be developed to include a wider range of practices than those associated with relative clause constructions.

### *8.0 Respective contributions of Pêcheux and Vološinov to a materialist theory of language and ideology.*

Both Pêcheux and Vološinov firmly reject attempts to constitute the object of linguistic study in terms of a distinction between abstract system versus contingent and unsystematic event, especially where this distinction is used to focus upon the former to the exclusion of the latter. Both of them recast versions of the *langue* versus *parole* distinction. In the case of Vološinov, the distinction between *langue* and *parole* becomes reformulated as the distinction between *meaning* and *theme*, where *meaning* amounts to the technical linguistic apparatus for the implementation of a *theme* - the specific, evaluatively accented meaning of an utterance in situation. It is *theme*, of course, rather than *meaning* which becomes the focus of Vološinov's enquiry.

In the case of Pêcheux, the distinction between system and event becomes reformulated as the distinction between linguistic basis and discursive process. The linguistic basis amounts to a

"set of phonological, morphological and syntactic structures, [which] is endowed with a *relative autonomy* that makes it subject to internal laws which constitute, precisely, the object of linguistics." [p. 58]

Discursive processes develop on the basis of these internal laws; but they represent, in relation to the linguistic basis,



the determinant existence of the complex whole of ideological formations, subject, in always specific historical conditions to the 'general' law of unevenness which affects these formations (as practical ideologies and theoretical ideologies and via their simultaneously 'regional' and class characteristics) in the process of reproduction/transformation of the existing relations of production" [p.185]

In short, 'every discursive process is inscribed in an ideological class relationship' (p.59).

As a corollary of their refusal to focus upon the abstract linguistic system in isolation from social process, both Pêcheux and Vološinov also reject any notion of fixed or stable meaning invariably attached to specific linguistic entities, whether this be at the level of the word or the proposition. For Pêcheux "words, expressions and propositions get their meanings from the discursive formation to which they belong." (p.188)

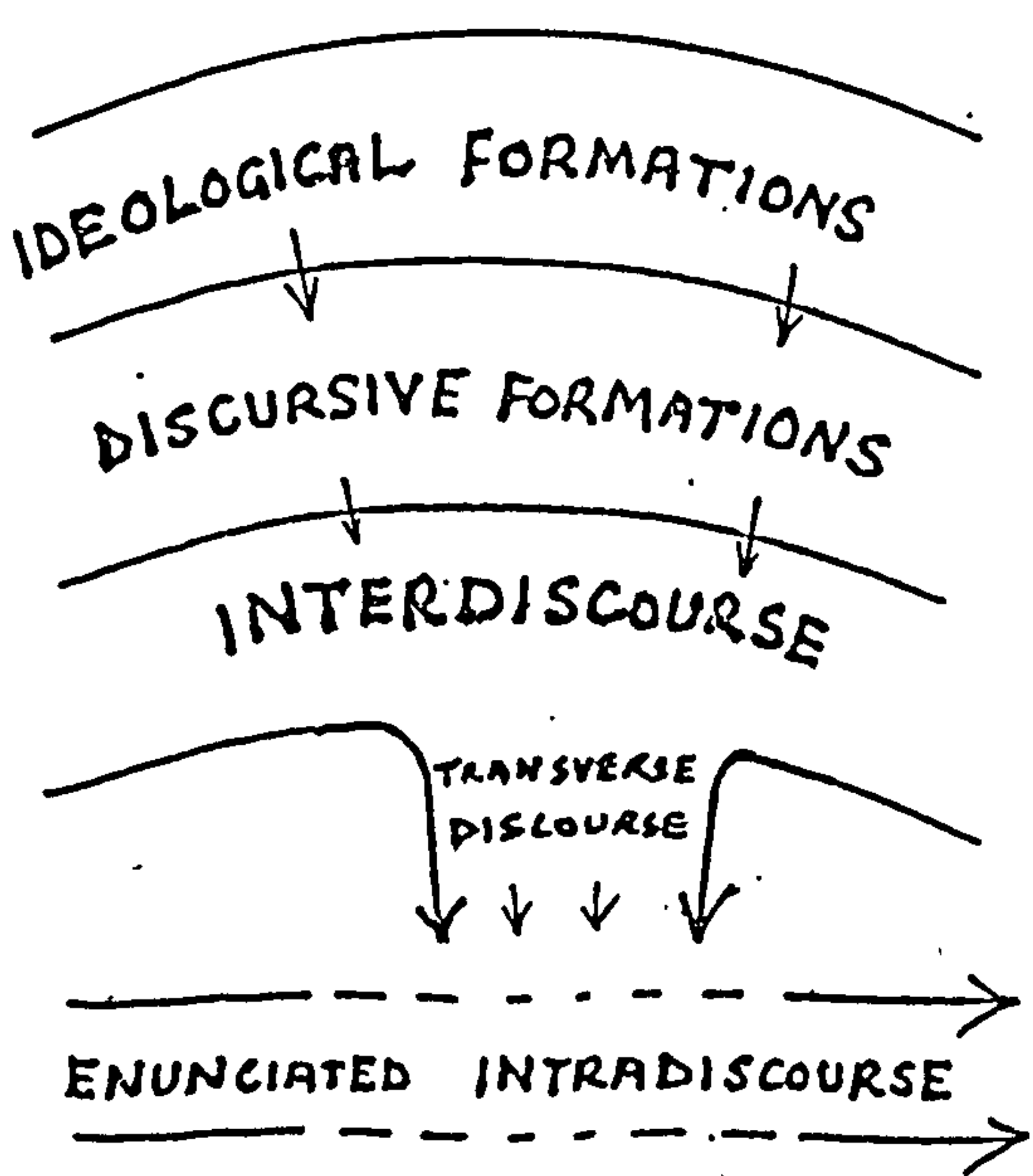
"[A] word expression or proposition does not have a meaning 'of its own' attached to it in its literalness; its meaning is constituted in each discursive formation, in the relationships into which one word, expression or proposition enters with other words expressions or propositions of the same discursive formation." [pp.111-112]

Similarly, in Vološinov "multiplicity of meanings is the constitutive feature of the word." (p.101) "There are as many meanings of a word as there are contexts of its usage." (p.79) Significantly, Pêcheux's reference to discursive formation is paralleled in Vološinov by a reference to genre.

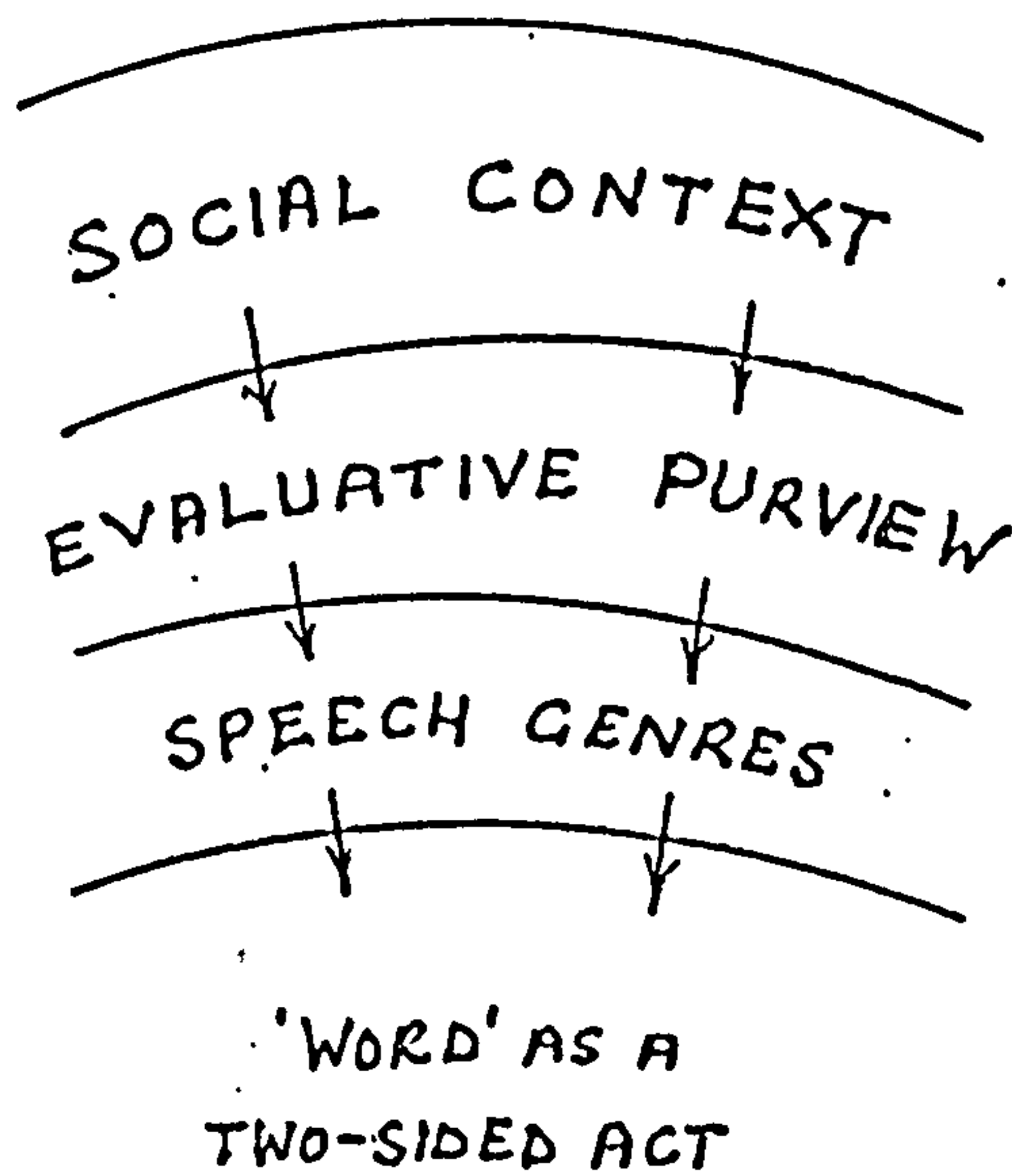
"Words acquire their expressive colouring only in the utterance, and this colouring is independent of their meaning taken individually and abstractly...When we select words in the process of constructing an utterance, we by no means always take them from the system of language in their neutral *dictionary* form. We usually take them from *other utterances*, and mainly from utterances that are kindred to ours in genre, that is in theme composition or style. Consequently, we choose words according to their generic specifications

Thus, there is a further important point of resemblance between Vološinov and Pêcheux. They each relate the operation of definable linguistic units outwards to larger formations. In Pêcheux, as we have noted, the operation of particular compositional tendencies, such as relative clauses, are related to discursive and ideological formations and thus to the class struggle. Similarly, in Vološinov, the meaning of signs is related outwards to genres, to evaluative purviews and thus again to the class struggle.

The resemblances between the two may be summed up diagrammatically as follows:



PÊCHEUX



VOLOŠINOV

### 8.1 'Discursive formation' and 'genre',

Despite the close resemblances between Vološinov and Pêcheux on several substantive issues, there remain some important points of difference that go beyond the manifest variations in terminology. Perhaps the most interesting area of apparent correspondence and underlying difference between Pêcheux and Vološinov is precisely in this area of discursive formation and behavioural genre. I have already suggested above the nature of the difficulties that emerge in Pêcheux's work around the notion of discursive formation. Some of these difficulties derive from the sheer sketchiness of Pêcheux's treatment. Vološinov's proposals about behavioural genres (or speech genres as they become in Bakhtin's later essay on the topic) are somewhat more developed, even whilst they remain programmatic. Their importance derives from the way in which they mediate for Vološinov between the linguistic order, conceived in terms of the word or utterance, and the social order.

"Each period and each social group has had and has its own repertoire of speech forms for ideological communication in human behaviour. Each set of cognate forms, i.e., each behavioural speech genre has its own corresponding set of themes.

An interlocking organic unity joins the form of communication (for example, on-the-job communication of the strictly technical kind), the form of the utterance (the concise, businesslike statement) and its theme. Therefore, *classification of the forms of utterance must rely upon classification of the forms of verbal communication* [i.e. behavioural speech genres]. The latter are entirely determined by production relations and the sociopolitical order. Were we to apply a more detailed analysis, we would see what enormous significance belongs to *the hierarchical factor* in the processes of verbal interchange and what a powerful influence is exerted on forms of utterance by the hierarchical organisation of communication... *A typology of these forms* is one of the urgent tasks of Marxism."

[*Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* pp. 20-21]

Genres, therefore, face both ways. On the one hand, they help to regulate the specific forms of the utterances that compose them. And on the other hand, they enact particular kinds of social organisation and



relationship. In this sense they are quite historically and culturally specific.

Only when social custom and circumstances have fixed and stabilized certain forms in behavioural interchange to some appreciable degree, can one speak of specific types of structure in genres of behavioural speech. So, for instance, an entirely special type of structure has been worked out for the genre of light and casual causerie of the drawing room where everyone 'feels at home' and where the basic differentiation within the gathering (the audience) is that between men and women. Here we find devised special forms of insinuation, half-sayings, allusions to little tales of an intentionally non-serious character, and so on. A different type of structure is worked out in the case of conversation between husband and wife, brother and sister, etc. In the case where a random assortment of people gathers - while waiting in a line or conducting some business - statements and exchanges of words will start and finish and be constructed in another, completely different way. Village sewing circles, urban carouses, workers' lunchtime chats, etc., will all have their own types. Each situation, fixed and sustained by social custom, commands a particular kind of organisation of audience and, hence, a particular repertoire of little behavioural genres. The behavioural genre fits everywhere into the channel of social intercourse assigned to it and functions as an ideological reflection of its type, structure, goal, and social composition. The behavioural genre is a fact of social milieu. It meshes with that milieu and is delimited and defined by it in all its internal aspects. [op.cit.: pp.96-97]

We can see here a highly concrete and specific characterisation of genre, defined in terms both of the types of utterances that constitute them, and also in terms of the sequential organisation of those types. These twin aspects of discursive organisation are in turn related to the kind of social organisation involved.

There is also, however, it must be noticed, a somewhat reductive sense of determination at work, which works unidirectionally 'downwards' from social organisation to the utterance: Vološinov variously writes that 'each situation .. *commands* .. a repertoire of little behavioural genres'; or that the behavioural genre has its place in social intercourse 'assigned to it'; that it functions as an ideological *reflection*'; and

that it is 'defined and delimited by social milieu in all its internal aspects. Developed in these terms the notion of genre becomes reduced to a mere epiphenomenon of pre-established patterns of social organisation.

At various points in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* Vološinov attacks 'psychologism' on the grounds that it erroneously reduces ideological, linguistic and cognitive phenomena to mere emanations of a pre-constituted 'psyche'. Psychologism, therefore, mistakenly assumes that 'the mind', or mental structures, somehow constitute themselves independently of language, culture and the social process, which thereby come to reflect their operation. However, in challenging such a questionable set of assumptions, Vološinov seems to slip into an alternative difficulty which could be called 'sociologism', since it amounts to the view that social processes and social organisation is constituted prior to, and independently of, language and verbal interaction. "Signs", insists Vološinov (with some justification), "can only arise on *interindividual territory*." (p.12) He then, however, develops the point as follows:

It is territory that cannot be called "natural" in the direct sense of the word: signs do not arise between any two members of the species *Homo sapiens*. It is essential that the two individuals be organised socially, that they compose a group (a social unit); only then can the medium of signs take shape between them."

[op. cit.; p. 12]

Clearly, it is assumed that social organisation pre-exists the emergence of signs. But this assumption begs the rather difficult question of how the group or social unit evolved in a socially organised way without somehow communicating with itself. It is surely more reasonable, indeed more dialectical, to assume that forms of communication and forms of social organisation are mutually implicated in each other.

Although *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* becomes one-directional in its account, to the point at times of slipping into a species of vulgar materialism, the concept of genre need not necessarily be compromised by this reductionism. It would seem capable of providing a crucial mediating link between the social order and the discursive. Indeed, formal innovations within genres do not merely reflect changes within the social formation: it is rather that, as Raymond Williams observes,

"the formal innovation is a true and integral element of the changes themselves: an articulation, by technical discovery, of changes in consciousness which are themselves forms of consciousness of change."

[Williams, R. 1981: 141]

For this reason, the study of genre may in the first instance be necessarily a matter of formal analysis: not, however,

"as a way of denying or making irrelevant a social analysis; rather as a new and technically rigorous kind of social analysis of *this* social practice." [Williams, R. 1981: 141]

The concept of genre, therefore, is particularly apt for exploring the relationship of the linguistic to the social: on the one hand, in terms of a particular configuration of discursive practices, it connects with the linguistic order; on the other hand, in terms of the communicative enactment of a particular form of social organisation, it connects with the social order. It needs to be stressed, however, that generic forms are active with respect to the very forms of social relationship that they instantiate; they constitute those relationships, as well as express them.

One of the problems with the notion of discursive formation is that it fosters an approach that remains locked within a world of differing discourses uncertainly characterised and only vaguely connected with



the extra-discursive realm of material action; thus, it is difficult explain, for instance, how meanings come into conflict or why they should change. The advantage of the concept of genre over that of discursive formation lies precisely in the fact that it is capable of more detailed specification and articulation with both specific discursive practices and extra-discursive reality: it can be detailed in terms of a particular ensemble of discursive practices at the same time as it can be seen to connect more directly with concrete instances of the social formation.

At the same time it must be recognised that the notion of discursive formation does carry with it one particular advantage. Whereas the notion of genre may be especially apt for connecting the linguistic/discursive order to the social, the notion of discursive formation has greater potential for articulating the relationship between, on the one hand, the domain of ideology and, on the other hand, aspects of its subjective appropriation. Pêcheux's contribution to the question of how ideology is appropriated rests heavily on three fundamental principles drawn from the work of Althusser (1971).

1. There is no practice except by and in an ideology.
2. There is no ideology except by the subject and for subjects.
3. Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects.

A full account of Althusser's position on ideology is beyond the scope of this chapter. But his argument may be very briefly summarised as follows.

The social formation is not an aggregate of autonomous and isolated individuals. It is composed of socially constituted persons ('subjects') whose subjectivity (thoughts, feelings, experiences) is formed in

socially determined ways. The process whereby this subjectivity is formed or constituted is termed *interpellation*: the subject is 'called into place' by ideology. In effect, claims Althusser, subjectivity emerges in response to the presentation of frameworks of meaning current in the social formation and it is these which give form and shape to the inchoate flux of experience. The frameworks of meaning and belief are not evenly and uniformly distributed through the social formation. Nor, however, are they randomly and arbitrarily distributed. They are concretely and specifically located as part of the complex whole in dominance of ideological formations within the social formation, so that subjectivity is a function of the place of the subject within the overall social formation. It is in this way that 'ideology interpellates individuals as subjects'.

Although Althusser makes little overt reference to language, his account of interpellation clearly implies a crucial role for it. This is particularly evident in his example of interpellation at work.

"Ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!'"  
By responding, the hailed individual "becomes a *subject*. Why? Because he has recognised that the hail was 'really' addressed to him, and that 'it was *really him* who was hailed' (and not someone else)" [Althusser; p. 48]

This kind of recognition by the subject, implicit in the process of interpellation, is for Althusser also a recognition of the 'obviousness' of meaning in ideology. As he comments:

"Like all obviousnesses, including those that make a word 'name a thing' or 'have a meaning' (therefore including the obviousness of the 'transparency' of language), the 'obviousness' that you and I are subjects - and that that does not cause any problems - is an ideological effect, the elementary ideological effect. It is indeed a peculiarity .

of ideology that it imposes (without appearing to do so, since these are 'obviousnesses') obviousnesses as obviousnesses, which we cannot *fail to recognise* and before which we have the inevitable and natural reaction of crying out (aloud or in the 'still, small voice of conscience'): 'That's obvious! That's right! That's true!'" [op.cit.: pp. 45-46]

Pêcheux's project in *Language Semantics and Ideology* can be seen precisely as attempt to develop the linguistic implications of such a claim in more detail: indeed, he subtitles the book - in a clear reference to this quotation - '*Stating the Obvious*'. And as he himself characterises his project:

"All my work finds its definition here, in this linking of the question of the *constitution of meaning* to that of the *constitution of the subject*, a linking which is not marginal .. but is located inside the 'central thesis' itself, in the figure of interpellation." [Pêcheux: p. 105]

One way of developing the link between the constitution of meaning and the constitution of the subject could be through an adapted Whorfian or Saussurean account, whereby experience (subjectivity) remains inchoate and in flux until the entry into the symbolic order, language, which makes available categories, terms and processes, not only for the rendering of experience, but also for its active shaping and organisation. The problem, however, with developing the link in these terms is that the symbolic order - the language - is conceptualised within Whorfian and Saussurean approaches as a unified totality, implying in consequence that ideology (here as world view) would be the same for all members of the language community. Pêcheux's distinction between linguistic basis and discursive process is precisely designed to offer a different way of articulating the link. Subjectivity is not evenly constituted 'on the linguistic basis' in terms of a unified symbolic order. Instead, Pêcheux proposes that particular meanings are constituted in particular discursive processes; and since 'every discursive process is inscribed into an ideological class relationship',



subjectivity is constituted in uneven and contradictory ways, depending upon the discursive formation that the processes are locked into. Interpellation, for Pêcheux, is thus predicated upon the discursive operation of the 'preconstructed' and 'the sustaining effect'. These two types of interdiscourse 'appear to determine the subject by imposing-upon-him-concealing-from-him his [sic] subjection behind the appearances of autonomy'. And, at the most abstract and general level,

"the 'preconstructed' corresponds to the 'always-already there' of the ideological interpellation that supplies-imposes 'reality' and its 'meaning' in the form of universality (the 'world of things'), whereas 'articulation' constitutes the subject in his [sic] relationship to meaning." [op.cit.: p.115]

In more concrete terms, what seems to be at stake is as follows. Any enunciation within intradiscourse opens up implicational spaces either for the operation of the 'preconstructed' or for the 'sustaining effect'. These spaces (inferential gaps) require completion by the subject to secure the intelligibility of whatever has been enunciated. The subject supplies the sense of the enunciation by recourse to transverse discourse. Accordingly, supplying the inferential links or filling the implicational space within interdiscourse is at the same time to be recruited to the terms of that very transverse discourse which provides the grounds of its intelligibility. But, insofar as the subject in this way renders the enunciation intelligible, she or he has, by this very act, been interpellated. Crucially, of course, this may occur outside the level of conscious awareness. It is as if ideology along the axis of transverse discourse underpins the obviousness of the enunciation; and - in the act of recognition that subscribes to this obviousness - the subject is interpellated.

Pêcheux in this way supplies more detail about how ideology is subjectively appropriated in the act of interpellation - by focussing particularly on the role of language in this process. Indeed, his treatment does, it would seem, provide a way of developing the notion of interpellation in such a fashion that it goes beyond a merely general and abstract characterisation of the positioning of the subject within ideology. One notable limitation of the Althusserian account, especially when it is rendered in its most schematic form, is that the role and practice of specific ideologies becomes obscured under an ahistorical rubric governing the operation of Ideology-in-general: in consequence, his emphasis falls upon the constitution of the Subject as such (this being justified by reference to it being 'the elementary ideological effect') at the expense of exploring particular interpellations into specific ideologies. In this respect, Pêcheux's emphasis on discursive process as a mode of interpellation allows precisely for a greater degree of specificity. As long as it is possible to delineate the particular parameters of concrete discursive formations, it should be possible to go beyond merely abstract accounts of the positioning of the subject within ideology, and to address instead the interpellation of the subject by concrete ideologies in specific, enunciated discourses.

As we saw above, however, problems arise with Pêcheux in actually working through his general insights on specific instances of discourse. In this respect, the study of the defence issue reported above in Chapter Four does attempt in a detailed way to show how the implicational spaces around which interpellation takes place might be modelled. A close resemblance, therefore, may be seen between intradiscourse and the activity of glossing. And a further more crucial

resemblance may be noted between transverse discourse and the scripts and ideologics which were modelled for the defence issue. Thus, I would argue that the case study of defence discourse demonstrates ways in which what Pêcheux calls the preconstructed and the sustaining effect may be analysed in terms that are both flexible enough to handle a wide range of cases but insightful enough to illustrate the action of discourse at a particular historical moment. What Pêcheux reminds us of, however, is that the obviousness of the scripts and ideologics (for example that 'bullies should be vanquished') is a mode of interpellation.



FOOTNOTES:

- (1) Although translations of Vološinov's work only appeared in the West in the 1970's, when pragmatic questions in linguistics were already a focus of concern, it is instructive to note that a citation of his book was given a prominent place in Roman Jakobson's *Shifters, Verbal Categories, and the Russian Verb* (1957). 'Shifters' correspond to what is now dealt with more generally under the heading of ' deixis ' or ' exophoric reference ' - a crucial area in pragmatics. So, in addition to profound anticipation on Vološinov's part, there may also be indirect influence via Jakobson.
- (2) 'Sign', 'Word', and 'Utterance' are used interchangeably by Vološinov. In the early chapters of the book, 'Sign' and 'Word' seem to commute freely. In the later chapters, 'Sign' and 'Utterance' appear to be equivalent.
- (3) Woods (1977), in a careful survey of Pêcheux's work undertaken before the English translation of *Verites de la Falice*, refers constantly to 'intrication' rather than 'imbrication'. Even if this is an alternative translation rather than a typesetting error, it is not clear that any great illumination is cast by its use.
- (4) Significantly, one important attempt to apply aspects of Pêcheux's work cuts this gordian knot merely by collapsing the plane of ideology into that of discourse by speaking of 'ideological-discursive formations' (see Fairclough 1984, 1988)

(5) My doubts about the claims made concerning 'nominalisation' by Fowler and his colleagues have developed since writing this section, especially after conversations with Nigel Fabb. The problems seem to be as follows.

(a) Are all nominals derived from predicates? If not, then it is necessary to provide a procedure for distinguishing between derived and non-derived. Fowler and associates tend to reticent on this point.

(b) For those nominals that are derived should a further distinction be made between morphologically derived nominals and transformationally derived nominals, because there seems to be a problem in assuming that where there is a morphological relationship, then there must be transformational relationship. Is *sanction* (a nominal), for instance, transformationally derived from a base predicate *to sanction*? This would seem unlikely because from a synchronic perspective *to sanction* (v) now means to authorise, approve, whereas *sanction* (n) now means restriction, punishment, penalty (cf. e.g. CoBuild 1234) - the verb almost reverses the sense of the noun and that can't be handled by a transformation. Basically, the relation between derived nominals and associated verbs is highly irregular. I think this was what Chomsky was saying in his (1970) 'Remarks on Nominalization'.

In short, there seems to be little control over the procedure as used at present so that practically any nominal, for which a morphologically related adjective or verb can be identified, seems to be treated, or could be treated as nominalisation, precisely because there are no rules for displaying the procedure.

*PART FOUR*  
DISCOURSE, GENRE AND AUDIENCE



## INTRODUCTION

In Part Two, Chapter Two, I draw upon a distinction between the way in which utterance on the one hand 'constructs reality' in a determinate and selective way; and on the other hand organizes the relationship between itself and its audience along specific lines, so that the process of constructing 'a reality' is one that simultaneously implies a relationship with 'a recipient' of a particular type. The intervening chapters have focussed more specifically on the role of language as 'representation'. In the remaining chapters I take up in more detail the other side of the distinction - the 'relational' dimension. Chapter Six deals with disk jockey talk which is treated as a type of discourse which is particularly strong in the interpersonal or relational dimension. This provided me with the opportunity of developing ideas on direct address first formulated in Chapter Two in the discussion of the texts on poverty. Chapter Seven recapitulates some of the same material but in the context of a broadened argument relating to the formation of publics. Shifts in modes of direct address are here seen as part and parcel of historical changes in the communicative setting in which genres of discourse operate. The argument - that changes in direct address are particularly sensitive to the precise conditions of co-presence under which texts are produced and that changes in the modes of production of text interrelate with changes in direct address - connects usefully with observations by Durant on terms of address in pop music (Durant 1984a) and also his comments on secondary orality (Durant, 198b). There are also, I believe, useful connections to be made with Scannell's (1988) and with Cardiff's (1986) discussions of the changing styles of British broadcasting. Indeed, my growing awareness of the significance of direct address came partly through experience of studying the discourse of popular daytime radio.

At the same time, it seemed to open up issues of genre which were briefly touched upon in the discussion of Vološinov in Chapter Five. Direct address is, I believe now, a sensitive indicator of genre; and issues of genre - and the kinds of meaning that that may be associated with particular generic types of discourse - surface increasingly strongly in the chapters that follow.

**CHAPTER SIX**

**D-J TALK**

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"Radio . for me . is the opportunity . to really . exploit . the listener's mind as much as possible to encourage them as much as possible . to join you . to make your job easier"

[Noel Edmonds]

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This paper attempts to characterise some features of the discourse produced by D-J's between playing records on BBC Radio One. Because of legal restrictions on the amount of broadcast time that can be devoted purely to playing music, various strategies have evolved for 'filling the spaces' between records - including quizzes, phone-ins, interviews, jingles, and so on. None of these, of course, remains pure and simply a 'space-filler': each performs a determinate range of functions such as including the audience or dramatising the station's broadcast identity, each having its own special interest. This paper, however, focuses on a particular sub-variety of talk between records on Radio One - that spoken by the D-J as extempore (and sometimes less than extempore) monologue. Monologues, where speech is produced and controlled exclusively by a single speaker - in this case the D-J, comprise a substantial component of talk on this channel, and yet they raise particular challenges both for the study of broadcast talk and for the study of talk in general.

### **1.1 Issues in the analysis of monologue**

Monologue raises particular kinds of problems for both discourse analysis (DA) and for conversation analysis (CA) - two of the main traditions devoted to the study of talk. In each case the boundary between one turn and another provides a crucial point of entry to the analysis. In conversation analysis, for example, the orderliness of talk

is actually displayed in the relation between one turn and another. As Sacks and Schegloff put it in an early but characteristic formulation:

Our analysis has sought to explicate the ways in which the (conversational) materials are produced by members in orderly ways that exhibit their orderliness, have their orderliness appreciated and used, and have that appreciation *displayed and treated as the basis for subsequent action.*

[Schegloff & Sacks: Opening up Closings, 1973: 290] [my italics]

Displays of orderliness are thus most transparent and evident precisely in the relationship between turns by successive speakers, of which adjacency pair formats and their attendant preference organisations provide the prime examples. There have, of course, within CA been some studies of the organisation of extended turns, but these have depended heavily upon the presence and placement of some kind of receipt token produced by co-participants - e.g. laughter in Sacks' account of a joke (Sacks: 1974, 1978), and applause in studies of speech making (see Atkinson 1984a+b)

The situation within (interactional) discourse analysis is broadly similar, since there the identification of the boundaries of discourse units depends heavily on speaker change; and description of their function depends heavily on relations of mutual implication between a move by one speaker and the succeeding move by another.

It is in just these respects that the monologue character of D-J talk constitutes something of a challenge. Put quite baldly, since turn-taking is suspended for much of this talk, there is no possibility of using notions of turn transition to determine boundaries of units. Nor is it possible to use exchange of speaking turns as a guide to what aspects of an utterance might be doing: there is no second turn or

answering move to help define how a first has been deployed. It is in these respects, therefore, that D-J monologue poses problems to general accounts of the operation of talk.

## 1.2 Issues in the study of language and the media

There is also, however, another tradition of work to which D-J talk poses something of a challenge; and this is work - especially from a basis within media studies - that treats language as crucially implicated in the production and circulation of ideologies. (See, e.g., Trew, 1979; Hartley, 1982). Here language is seen very much as a resource for making statements about the world, or shaping our experience of it, in ways which may be more or less true, more or less misleading. The process of representation is seen as heavily dependent on linguistic practice and at the same time never neutral or disinterested. Consequently, work within this tradition is most at ease when handling representations from the social, political or economic spheres - such as strikes, demonstrations, and forms of civil disorder, especially where these occur in the form of 'reportings' - TV news bulletins, newspaper headlines, and so on.

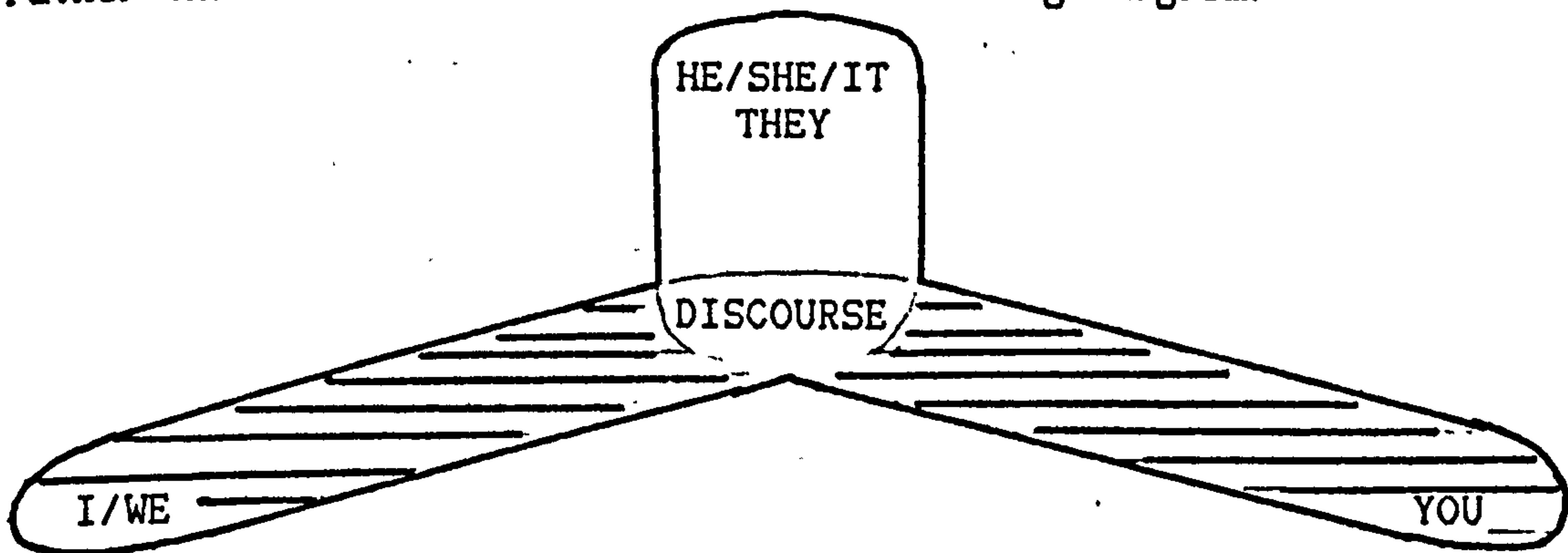
I have no wish to take issue with this kind of project; it provides an important critical instrument for unravelling one dimension of the textual practices of the media. But it does not provide an exhaustive and comprehensive account of those practices. D-J talk, for instance, sits uneasily within this kind of approach, precisely because so little of what it does is actually bound up with reportings. (Announcing future events is, if anything, more central.) Where events are reported, they are more likely to concern either station personnel or media personalities than the world of social, political and economic affairs.



And even here such accounts tend towards parody:

I can now exclusively reveal that this morning the keyboard player in Matt Bianco gottup and was mugged by his rabbit

In general, it may loosely be characterised as a discourse of the present and future tense rather than the past, projecting forwards rather than backwards in time. Where it is concerned with events, these tend to be drawn from the small change of the everyday lives of media personalities (including the station's own staff) or of the audience itself. Indeed it may be more accurate to characterise it as a discourse obsessively concerned with its own conditions of production and consumption. It tends to foreground the relationship of the D-J to the talk, and the relationship of the talk to the audience, rather than the relationship of the talk to 'the world at large'. Unlike news programmes, for example, (where the role of the newscaster in particular and the broadcasting institution in general is often elided from the discourse so that its preferred mode is third person, past tense, with little direct reference to the audience), D-J talk operates much more frequently along the axis between first and second person, between I and YOU. In schematic terms it tends to occupy the shaded rather than the unshaded areas of the following diagram:



Work in language and ideology, in fact, tends to be more concerned with the unshaded areas of the diagram, rather than the shaded. Its primary

emphasis is on representation - on the relationship of words to world; and, in keeping with this emphasis, it tends to focus on the ideational components of discourse, particularly those such as transitivity most concerned with the *representational* or *observer* function of language "as the expression of the processes and other phenomena of the external world, including the world of the speaker's own consciousness" (Halliday, 1978: 48). There is something of a consequent neglect of interpersonal dimensions of the discourse, precisely that dimension most foregrounded in D-J talk. D-J talk, therefore, can be seen as a kind of limiting case both for work on language and ideology within media studies, and for the analysis of talk in general. It is in just these respects, however, that its interest lies. If we are to have a comprehensive account of the role of media discourse in the reproduction of social life, then it must be one that includes the interpersonal dimension of talk as well as its ideational aspects - the social-relational as well as the ideological; and yet, paradoxically it must also be able to handle the monologic utterance as well as the dialogic. To this end I shall outline some further characteristics in more detail and then return to these broader issues in conclusion.

## *2.0 FOREGROUNDING THE INTERPERSONAL*

Foregrounding the social-relational dimension of talk is done in a variety of ways. For one thing, the quality of the relationship between the D-J and audience can become the explicit focus for comment, as in the following where the exact degree of formality adopted by a correspondent is used as a topical resource.

I(t)s now fourteen minutes to two:: . on Gary's Bit-in-the-Middle  
and hi to Bob Sproat in erm Charford Bromsgrove - in  
Worcestershire (0.5)  
(who) said HEY:: howya doing  
I love these informal ways that you're writing to me now

forget the dears you know  
dears are a thing of the past I mean it's just so formal .  
just put HEY:: howya doing or summin like that you know  
(0.3)  
e especially when you're writing to your bank  
go:: HEY:: howya doing boss you know  
gonna give me the dosh or what  
(0.3)  
simple  
(0.3)  
er anyway Bob says just thought I'd write

## 2.1 Modes of Address: Person Deixis

More significantly, perhaps, it is a discourse that frequently addresses its audience in direct terms. This is done most commonly and basically by the use of the second person pronoun, 'YOU'. While this not uncommonly refers to the audience as a whole, its field of reference is frequently narrowed down by the use of an accompanying 'identifier'. Thus, 'YOU' may be identified

by name;

*Alison and Liz* you are now official listeners for ward  
eighteen

*Ian Schlessor* hello happy birthday to you

you are now

*Marjorie*

the official radio one listener for Princess Street

yeh okay then *Bob Sproat* in er Worcestershire  
er . T-shirt on the way to you

by region;

coming up some information for anyone listening in  
Edinburgh

because I need your legs your hands your arms  
and the rest of you tomorrow morning in Princess Street  
nine thirty  
tell you about it after this

and er I din't know about where you are  
probably if you're nnn sort of in Scotland at the moment  
you got some quite nice weather  
but in London it's really dark and doomy

by occupation;



and anyone who's a typist in a hospital  
and has to read that writing by doctors  
congratulations

by event;

*if it's your birthday today* then you share it with all  
those people

*if it's your birthday* here's where your birthday file  
starts with your Horriblescope coming up in just a second

by age, or other characteristics;

*now if you're healthy and you're over ten years old*

I emphasise that 'cos the one thing I don't wanna er  
anybody to do is to get sick as a result of doing it  
on Friday November fifteenth might be nice idea if you just  
don't eat

and by star sign;

*hello scorpio*

although it takes a considerable amount of courage to  
realise a cycle or a chapter in you life has already come  
to a close

you must now face up to situations as they really are

And, of course, these occur not only singly but also in combination.  
They range in specificity from the fairly general (by region) to the  
highly restrictive (by name). The field of reference of 'YOU' is  
thereby constantly shifting. The item, indeed, lends itself to this kind  
of variation but it is instructive to note that the audience, though  
directly addressed, is not identified in stable terms but in shifting  
ones.

Direct address may be made all the more so by combining it with  
greetings tokens, as in the following:

hi to Bob Sproat  
Ian Schlessor hello happy birthday  
official listeners hi  
hello Scorpio

The most obvious everyday use of a greetings token is to open an encounter of a reciprocal kind under conditions where participants are mutually present to each other in some way. Given the monologic character of DJtalk and the absence of actual reciprocal co-presence between the DJ and audience, it is something of a curiosity that the talk should quite commonly be interspersed with such items. In effect, absent recipients are here treated as *if* co-present in a continual reopening of the discourse. By combining them with identifiers, then, new addressees are being continually greeted into the discourse, as if they were capable of responding. Even so, while the use of identifiers has the effect of singling out sometimes quite specific addressees, it is nonetheless important to note that they never exhaust the full range of the talk's intended recipients. The talk is always available for others than those directly named as addressees. There can at the very least be a kind of bifurcation between those whom the talk directly addresses and those for whom it is intended, as in the following:

okay Fleet Street  
they're all <sup>^</sup>wake now  
I have news of a rock star

The ostensible addressees of this overall fragment are print journalists, (metonymically identified as "Fleet Street"). Interpolated within it, however, is a comment ("they're all awake now") which refers to these same journalists in the third person, and thus redirects the utterance at that moment to alternative segments of the audience.

Another instance of bifurcation of addressee can be detected in the following example:

Libra  
oi Libra stop that it's dirty  
Libra let partners ....

Initially in the fragment, "Libra" is used to identify a segment of the

audience 'out there', viz. 'Librans' - anyone with a birthdate between Sept. 23 and Oct. 24. It is then used to address one, individual, uninhibited Libra fictionally constituted as co-present to the speaker - as somehow within the speaker's visual field ("stop that it's dirty"). Then the fragment switches back to address Librans in general. The discourse shifts its alignment with the audience by continually addressing different segments within it. Members of the audience are thereby cast and recast into different positions: any listener may vary from being addressed directly in particular terms, to being addressed directly in general terms, to being some kind of non-addressed recipient of the talk. Indeed, since any use of a specific identifier (e.g. 'anyone listening in Edinburgh') singles out a determinate sub-segment of the audience, it thereby has the simultaneous effect of excluding others, so that it is quite common for the audience to be in the position of overhearing recipient of a discourse that is being directly addressed to someone else.

Despite relegating substantial sections of the audience to the status of overhearers, it does not seem that the use of identifiers - even of the more specific kind - actually reduces the capacity of the discourse to engage the audience in general. On the contrary, the combination of identifiers with greetings and with direct address would seem to be part of the way in which a relatively dynamic relationship is achieved between the discourse and its broadcast audience.

## 2.2 Simulating Co-presence: Spatial Deixis

Whereas deixis of a social or personal type is heavily implicated in the activity of direct address, deixis of a spatial kind is prominent in what might be considered an extension of direct address - namely,



making reference to conditions of co-presence. The absence of co-presence may be made the explicit focus of attention, as in:

I wish you could see this place  
it's full of disc jockeys getting themselves all made up  
and looking nice

Or co-presence may expressly be simulated, as in:

er got my pumpkin here in the studio here  
it's really good (I) got a real pumpkin honestly  
I mean you probably think that I'm ninety  
but here hang on  
let me just hold this up in front of the microphone  
so you can see my pumpkin  
can you see that  
a real halloween pumpkin

There are references here to the immediate environment of the speaker ('*this place*', '*pumpkin here*') as if the details were visible to the audience ('*can you see that*'). In one respect this may be seen as playing with properties of the medium - treating an exclusively aural medium as if it had a visual dimension. In other respects, however, it can be understood as a device for erasing a sense of distance between speaker and audience - assuming a common visual field thereby implies a form of co-presence.

### 2.3 'Response-Demanding' Utterances

DJ-discourse is rarely if ever in some kind of seamless declarative mode. It is quite common for it to contain interrogatives and imperatives such as the following:

...how's Virgo doing?..  
...what's the gossip today..  
...have you noticed the penny for the guy things are  
starting to appear?..  
...can you see that?..  
  
...stop that its dirty..  
...listen..  
...but here hang on...

Since the normal operation of these as response demanding utterances

(either question or command) would involve (as in the case of greetings) some kind of reciprocal co-presence, these can be seen yet again as a further way of implicating the audience into the discourse. To treat the audience as if they were in visual contact with the speaker, available for greeting, and capable of responding to the discourse is to construct a sense of reciprocity even in its absence.

## 2.4 Expressives

In addition to direct address, spatial deixis, questions and commands, the interpersonal possibilities of discourse are further foregrounded by the common use of speech acts of the type described by Searle (1976) as expressives. Expressives are speech acts primarily devoted to expressing the psychological state of the speaker and the attitude or feelings of the speaker towards others. Paradigm cases would be 'congratulating', 'censuring', 'apologising', 'criticising'. Instances of 'congratulations' in disk jockey talk are utterances such as the following:

well done clever plugs

anyone who's a typist in a hospital and has to read that  
writing by doctors  
congratulations

Despite the clear reference to 'congratulation' in the latter example, it does in fact have much in common with the following instances of what might be called 'commiserations':

Leo

[oh dear]

Uranus in Sagittarius

[please please]

is is urging and even compelling you to sever a few ties

[oo that could be painful couldn't]

life each day as it comes must be faced

a listener for ever is Marjorie Bunting

[ah you must have suffered with that name]

in Woodlands in Doncaster

er Lisa  
[heh]  
Lisa Counter  
[poor dear with a name like that]  
er Lee Wildem

In contrast to congratulations and commiserations (which are positively predisposed towards their recipient) are a group of acts which might be classified (again loosely) as 'deprecations'. They are not as common as the other types of expressive and are as likely to be self-directed as other-directed. The following is an example of self-deprecation:

I think Andy by the way  
who's on the road for next two weeks  
[and heheheh let's face it  
you need a rest from me ((sniffle))]  
er will be keeping the official listeners thing going

An example of other-deprecation would be:

it's plagiarism fellas come on that's a two day old story

This latter example is addressed to Fleet St journalists who ran, as if it were up-to-date, a story that had been carried two days previously by the disk jockey.

Singling out a named individual for deprecation is rare, unless they can answer back in some way - so other disk jockeys are fair game. When an ordinary member of the audience is deprecated, or subjected to a 'put-down', they are usually quickly given some kind of counter-vailing 'build-up'. Otherwise, deprecations are more likely to be directed at groups for whom clear stereotypes exist, ones which seem to operate along clearly defined axes: journalists, doctors, and traffic-wardens are more likely to be deprecated than nurses, firemen, and typists.

## 2.5 Concluding Remarks on Foregrounding the Interpersonal

The interpersonal dimension of the discourse is thus foregrounded in a variety of overlapping ways. The audience is presented with a range of



participatory possibilities. It varies from being a direct addressee to being an overhearing recipient; and it is alternatively congratulated, deprecated and invited to respond. The alternatives may be represented schematically as follows:

RESPONSE DEMANDING	{	action("stop that")
		reply("can you see that")
EXPRESSIVES	{	'build-ups' ("congratulations")
		'put-downs' ("it's plagiarism fellas")
AUDIENCE STATUS	{	directly addressed
		overhearing recipient

In this way it may be seen that the audience is not treated in D-J discourse as a homogeneous mass or as a unitary subject (it is not really the case, as is sometimes claimed, that D-J's speak to "a single imaginary listener"). Programmers (and of course D-J's) are quite self consciously aware of the audience. A recent interview with the Controller of Radio 1 confirmed the way in which they tend to see the listeners as a set of communities to be catered for:

What the target audience is changes at different times of the day. For instance, in the early morning you've got whole families able to listen in until 9 to 9.30. Afterwards, Simon Bates is targeting to people listening in their own houses -- that has to be generically housewives. At lunchtime Gary Davies can broaden it out a bit more as the youngsters can listen to it in their school break.....

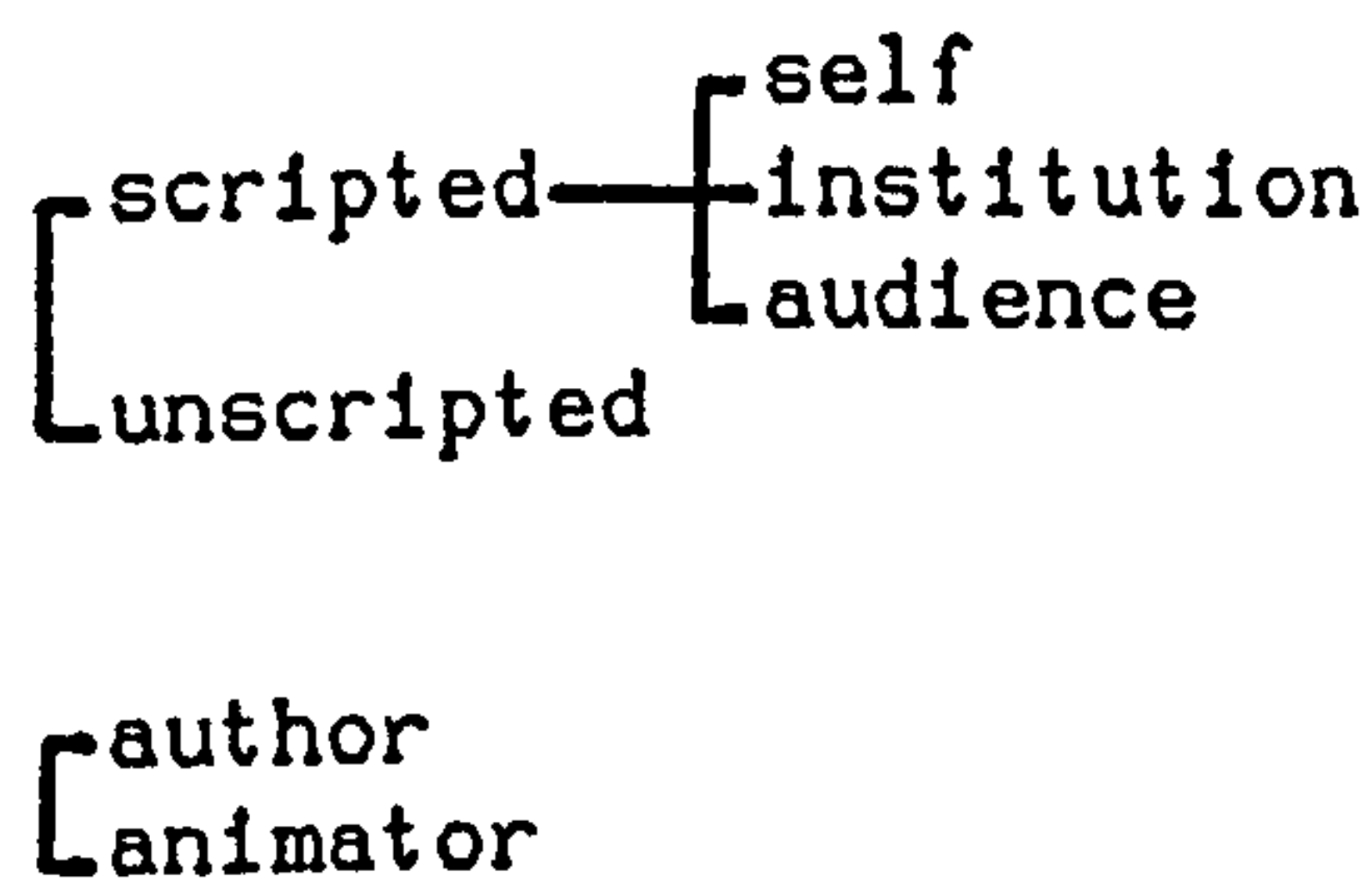
[Johnny Beerling, Controller Radio 1, Observer  
23 February]

These adjustments, however, are understood in terms of fairly large spans of broadcast time ("before breakfast", "afternoons", "evenings", etc.) into which different categories of music are placed. What remains unrecognised in comments such as the above is the ongoing character of the adjustments made to the alignment of the utterance. The participatory framework for the differing constituencies is constantly

altering. The audience is treated on a moment by moment basis as a complex, internally differentiated, phenomenon.

### 3.0 SPEAKER ALIGNMENT

The relationship of the D-J to the talk is also one of variable alignment. On occasion the D-J is animating pre-scripted materials such as "Horriblescopes", letters from listeners (e.g. "Our Tune"), interest items about celebrities, announcements about future events, and so on. Sometimes the D-J supplies his/her own scripted materials; sometimes, I presume, the production team has supplied them; and sometimes the audience itself has supplied them. And sometimes, of course, they are extemporising as they go along, playing off one or other of the different kinds of scripted materials. Building on Goffman (1981), we can summarise the possibilities as follows:



Hence, just as there are a variety of audience positions with respect to the discourse, there are also a variety of positions available to the D-J.

For the purposes of this paper I would wish to assert no more than that these possibilities seem to constitute an intuitively plausible set. I leave on one side the question of what specific textual criteria might be used to identify or recognise one alignment rather than another: for the moment, what precisely the specific alignment is at any

one time is possibly less interesting than the way in which such shifts occur. (Or maybe it is just easier to spot cases where shifts of alignment take than it is to specify precisely between what it is that the shifts occur.)

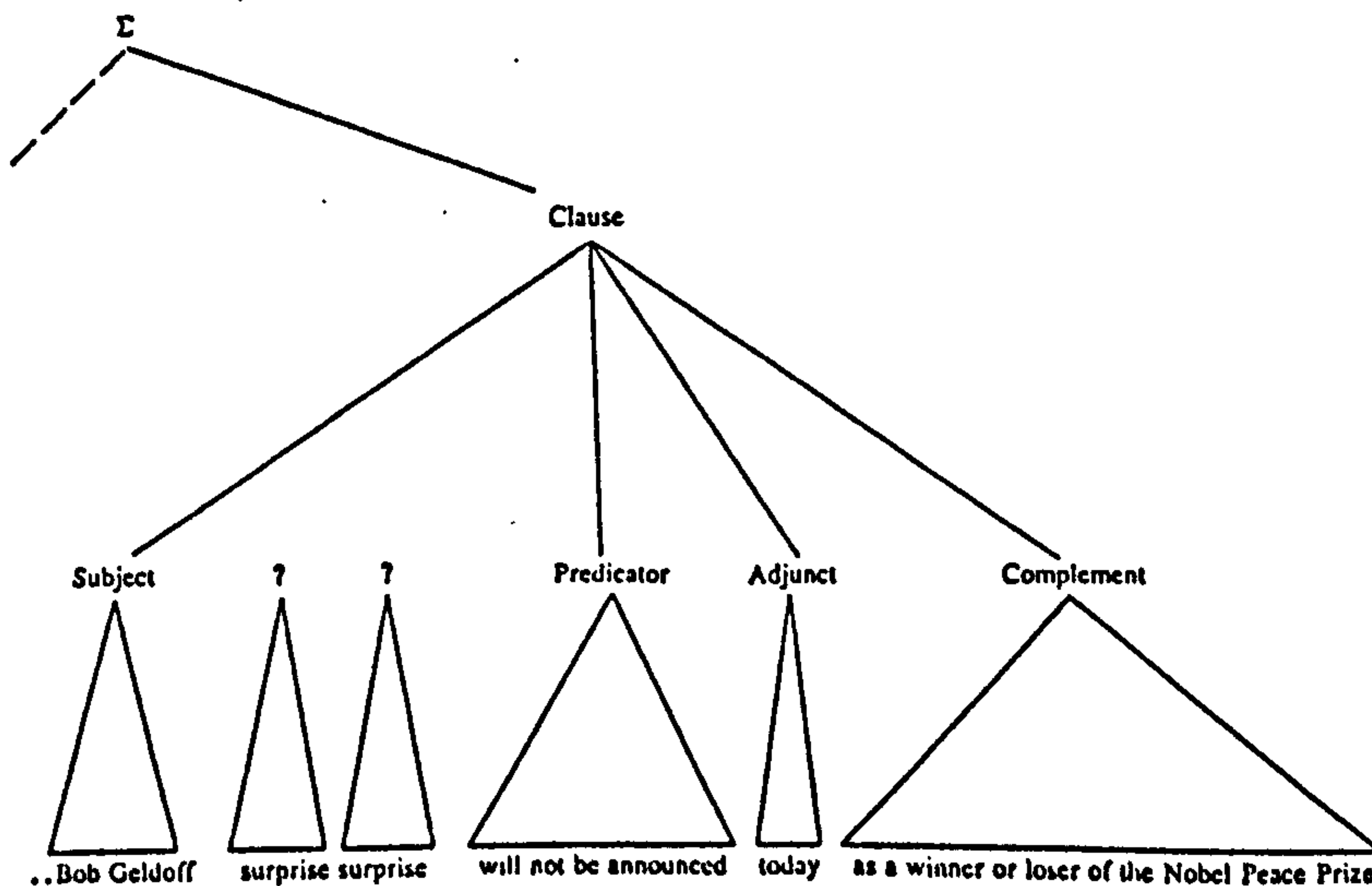
### 3.1 Interpolation

The most obvious cases of shift involve instances of insertion. The following may be seen as paradigm cases:

- Leo
- [oh dear]
- Uranus in Sagittarius
- [please please]
- is is urging and even compelling you to sever a few ties
- [oo that could be painful couldn't it]
- life each day as it comes must be faced
  
- all the papers picked up the piece we ran two days ago on this programme
- [I noticed]
- that Bob Geldoff
- [surprise surprise]
- will not be announced today as a winner or a loser of the Nobel Peace Prize

Both "please please" and "surprise surprise" may be considered as 'insertions' inasmuch as they do not actually constitute a component or element of the syntax of the clause that they occur within. They are not operating as any of the syntactic elements Subject, Predicator, Object, Complement, Adjunct, as may be seen in the following diagram.

FIGURE 2  
Syntactic elements





The difficulty of placing them syntactically is reinforced by their intonation: they occur as separate tone units, and this helps further to separate them off from the surrounding structure. Additionally, each of the paradigm cases consists of a repeated word; and this very reduplication supports the separation of the interpolated fragment from the surrounding discourse, by helping to limit or reduce possible structural ambiguities. Thus, the repetition of the item in "surprise surprise" undercuts a candidate interpretation at the moment of listening which brackets "surprise" and "Bob Geldoff" together, hearing "surprise" as 'head' to a 'noun modifier' "Bob Geldoff", by analogy with such structures as:

strawberry surprise

peppermint delight, etc.

Similarly, the reduplication of "please please" helps to separate it off from "Uranus in Sagittarius", thus excluding interpretations which mistake its structures analogous to

John by the window please

Ian to bed please

Not only is the interpolated item not part of the syntax of the discourse into which it is inserted: it is also quite commonly the case that the syntax of the surrounding discourse resumes after the interpolation as a straight continuation of the point reached immediately prior to it. Thus,

| a listener for ever is Marjorie Bunting  
→ [ah you must have suffered with that name]  
| in Woodlands in Doncaster

→ you are now  
→ [Marjorie]  
the official Radio One listener for Princess Street

This continuation immediately after the interpolation of the syntax from immediately before it may occur even after the insertion of a fairly extensive fragment, as may be seen in the following example:

now if you're healthy and you're over ten years old  
→ [I emphasise that 'cos the one thing I don't want anybody to do is to get sick as a result of doing it]  
on Friday November fifteenth might be a nice idea if you just didn't eat

The syntactic continuation may be very smooth as in the above example.

Quite frequently, however, it may involve some momentary hitch as in the following where the resumption is prefaced by "er":

I think Andy by the way  
who's on the road for the next two weeks  
→ [and heheheh let's face it  
you need a rest from me ((sniffle))]  
er will be keeping the official listeners thing going

The momentary hitch in resumption may also be manifested in such features as reduplicating the initial item at resumption:

Uranus in Sagittarius  
→ [please please]  
is is urging and even compelling you to sever a few ties

Whereas all the foregoing examples involve cases of insertion into an ongoing syntactic unit, it is also possible to find many cases where the insertion seems better understood as the interpolation of one kind of discourse into another. In such cases there is no syntactic link between the discourse after the interpolation and the discourse that precedes it. Instead, resumption of the discourse is marked by - for example - precise repetition at the onset of resumption of the last-most item prior to interpolation. Thus:

Libra  
→ [oi! Libra stop that it's dirty]  
Libra  
let partners procrastinate and argue

Or:

er Lisa  
→ [heh]  
Lisa Counter  
→ [poor dear with a name like that]

The onset of interpolation is sometimes associated with the occurrence of expressive particles such as laughter, "oh", "ah", "oo", "oi", as may be seen in the last two examples and in the following:

Leo  
→ [oh dear]  
Uranus in Sagittarius

Or:  
a listener for ever is Marjorie Bunting  
→ [ah you must have suffered with that name]  
in Woodlands in Doncaster

One curious feature about interpolations in general in D-J talk is their tendency to occur in the environment of a proper name. Clearly in some cases this is mainly in order to comment semi-facetiously on some characteristics of the name itself, as may be seen in the last three examples above. But this is by no means the only use of interpolations in the environment of a proper name, as may be seen from the following:

okay Fleet Street  
→ [they're all awake now]  
I have news of a rock star

Or:  
Bob Geldoff  
→ [surprise surprise]  
will not be announced today as a winner or a loser

Indeed, the particular operation of interpolation in these cases seems to cast light on their role in general, for they commonly seem to operate as a kind of reactive comment which may be oriented to the discourse itself:

...compelling you to sever a few ties  
→ [oo that could be painful couldn't it]  
life each day as it comes must be faced...

or it may express an attitude to the topic of the discourse as in the



Bob Geldoff example; it may express an attitude to the audience; it may even include some comment on the speaker himself, as in:

I think Andy by the way  
who's on the road for the next two weeks  
→ [and heheheh let's face it you need a rest from me  
(sniffle)]  
er will be keeping the official listeners thing going

It is not merely the case, therefore, that the discourse constitutes differing recipient positions for its audience. As this section illustrates, it also varies quite significantly in the kinds of compositional orientation adopted by the D-J. This latter kind of variation is reflected in the frequent interpolations that register the shifting stance of the D-J to the talk. At the same time, then, as the discourse projects itself in relation to its audience in continuously changing ways, so also does it carry inscribed within itself differing compositional tendencies, switching to and fro between - for instance - the scripted and the extempore.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In manifold ways, therefore, the discourse eludes characterisation as some seamless, integrated unity authored by a stable subject to a homogeneous, unitary audience. Despite issuing - in its monologic aspects, at least - from a single vocal source, it is maintained as a thing of many 'voices' addressed to many 'audiences'. Even as monologue it is an unstable mode. But its very instability lends to it a special kind of dynamic. On the one hand, it is continuously inclusive with respect to diverse constituencies within the audience in a personalising, familiar, even intimate, manner. (Quizz-spots, readers' letters, phone-ins, and so on, may be seen as developments of this strategy.) On the other hand, although the discourse may constitute the audience in fragmentary terms, it also manages simultaneously to

dramatise the relation of the audience to itself: as listeners we are made constantly aware of other (invisible) elements in the audience of which we form a part. At the same time, however, the discourse does not speak from a single authoritative position. It is sutured out of fragments which allow one 'voice' to put itself at a distance from, or call into question, the other 'voices' present in its composition.

This kind of fragmentariness constitutes an important dimension in the analysis of talk. For one thing, it provides in the phenomenon of interpolation a route into the isolation of unit boundaries in the compositional structure of monologue. Perhaps more significantly, however, it throws a more complex and variegated light on the study of language and ideology. Accounts of the ideological role of language in the media give particular attention to its representational function. And yet the process of constructing or reproducing a reality typically implies particular kinds of recipient or audience. Indeed, in D-J talk it is the construction and dramatisation of the respective relationships of D-J and audience to the discourse that receives particular emphasis. I would not wish to imply that that D-J talk is thereby empty of ideology, but rather that a proper account of its role has inevitably to go beyond the study of its linguistic structures as a means of representation. What we need to recognise is that (to use Althusserian terms) the interpellated subject of ideology can be addressed in discursively discriminated ways. Indeed, if forms of direct and indirect address share some degree of correspondence with Althusserian notions of interpellation, then we can see in the particular instance of D-J talk how manifold are the forms that interpellation can take. D-J discourse differentially identifies its audience and prepares different positions from which to receive it. This conclusion, however, emerges -

in part, at least - from close examination of the fine texture of the talk itself. The very details of the talk provide a crucial resource for more richly specific and empirically grounded, even if more densely complicated, accounts of the reproduction of social life by language in the media.



*CHAPTER SEVEN*

*DIRECT ADDRESS, AUDIENCE, AND GENRE*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with ways in which texts constitute their audience. It explores this issue by examining a cluster of features to be identified as *direct address*. The paper may thus be seen as an exercise in *discourse stylistics*, inasmuch as direct address is treated as a crucial aspect of the way some texts interact with their audiences. At the same time, it is also claimed that direct address may prove to be an interesting indicator of genre. Genres that promote, or depend upon, a high degree of involvement on the part of the audience - even where the texts involved are of a mediated kind - tend to be strong in direct address.

### 1.1 Sketch for a Discourse Stylistics

To use the term *discourse stylistics* is to gesture towards a type of work that is neither strictly 'discourse analysis' nor 'stylistics'. Stylistics has traditionally been concerned pre-eminently with the differences between or within texts, and these differences have commonly been explored in terms of the formal parameters of lexico-grammar<sup>(1)</sup>. Discourse analysis, on the other hand, has (within the Anglo-American tradition, at least) been predominantly concerned with general principles of connectivity between utterances or sentences whether this has been the cohesion of sentences into text<sup>(2)</sup> or the coherence of utterances into discourse<sup>(3)</sup>

I would like to suggest that discourse stylistics draws upon both traditions of scholarship to produce work embodying the following emphases.

1.1.1 In the first place, discourse stylistics approaches texts not as bearers of formal patterns but rather as instances of situated activity: it is thus concerned less with patterns of constituents than with utterances as modes of action.

1.1.2 As a consequence of this emphasis, discourse stylistics has necessarily to address the complex interplay between the utterance itself and its situation of use, by virtue of which it gains its communicative force. In doing so, discourse stylistics necessarily takes account of the way that utterances articulate, in the most simple case, a relationship between speaker and hearer; and, in more complex cases, a relationship between institutionalised modes of production (e.g. publishing conglomerates) and consumption (e.g. readerships)

1.1.3 Thirdly, discourse stylistics does not privilege in a priori fashion any one discursive domain over others. It does not, for example, restrict itself to consideration of literary discourse as a preconstituted sphere of culturally valued text which is then explored in terms of internal differences within the discourse domain, where these differences are defined most commonly and obviously by reference to author. On the contrary, it is committed to exploring and articulating the relationship of one discursive domain to another. In consequence, discourse stylistics has necessarily to engage with issues of discourse genres which are taken to be the product of particular discursive domains.<sup>4</sup>

1.1.4 For discourse stylistics to stress the situated character of utterance and to stress utterance as a form of action is to open its enquiries to issues of history - whether this be in terms of histories



of change within and between discursive domains and the genres that inhabit them; or whether it be in terms of the historical determinations of those changes. In these respects, therefore, discourse stylistics may be seen as the antithesis of what may be called 'formalist' stylistics - a stylistics where the emphasis dwelt mainly on the patterning of phonological or syntactic features, in texts mainly of an axiomatically literary type, where the principle and most common explanatory category for observed differences was that of 'author'<sup>(5)</sup>.

This paper adopts some of the foregoing principles, by focussing on a particular discursive practice - *direct address* - and tracing its operation through two contrasting types of discourse - BBC Radio One disc jockey talk on the one hand, and poetry on the other. Similarities and differences between the two types of discourse in their use of direct address are - it is argued - related to particular ways of constituting the audience.

## 2.0 DIRECT ADDRESS

It is difficult to envisage a case in which an utterance might be framed with no addressee in mind. Any utterance, given a concrete situation, is addressed to someone. In situations of co-presence the identity of the addressee may well be signalled by paralinguistic features such as gaze direction, postural set, relative proximity of participants, and so on. Because of this, it is not always necessary to encode within an utterance reference to its recipient. Indeed, utterances - whether spoken or written - will quite commonly include no explicit reference to the addressee. On the other hand, encoding reference to the addressee is always available as an option. This may be done most simply through the use of the second person pronoun,

'YOU'. When an utterance refers explicitly to its addressee in this way, it may be said to display 'direct address'. The term 'direct address', therefore, is being reserved for those cases when an utterance makes explicit reference to its addressee, principally by the use of 'YOU'.

'YOU', of course, as second person pronoun is an instance of what is termed 'person deixis' (Levinson, 1983: 68-73)); that is, it is a member of a class of items available in English for encoding or grammaticalizing the roles of speaker and hearer. Like all deictic items it identifies these persons by reference to the actual spatiotemporal context "created and sustained by the act of utterance" (Lyons, 1977: 637). The precise referent depends, therefore, on its particular occasion of use, and is primarily recoverable from the situation. There may also, however, be accompanying elements within the utterance which help define and identify the intended recipient, as - for example - in the use of vocative expressions, which may help to narrow or select from a possible field of reference.

Thus, various possibilities exist. While an utterance like

(1) Supper's ready!

is clearly intended for particular concrete recipients (those for whom the meal is being prepared), it relies on paralinguistic phenomena and the particular situation of utterance to signal the actual identity of the addressee. The following utterance operates in similar fashion except that it now employs direct address, as defined above, through the use of the second person pronoun:

(2) Your supper's ready!

Finally, in addition to encoding the addressee through the use of a grammatical option the utterance may invite a particular person or

persons to assume the role of addressee through the use of an explicit lexical item, as in the following:

(3) Your supper's ready, children!

In this case the utterance not only includes direct address, but also a lexically explicit mode of selection. Vocatives of this type I will refer to as 'selectors' or 'selecting expressions'.

### 3.0 DIRECT ADDRESS AND RADIO DISC JOCKEY<sup>(6)</sup> DISCOURSE

Disc jockey discourse (as represented by material collected from broadcasts by BBC Radio One) is a genre particularly strong in direct address. It is a discourse that constantly invokes its audience explicitly encoded through the use of the second person pronoun. Indeed I have referred to it elsewhere<sup>(7)</sup> as a discourse that foregrounds the interpersonal dimensions of meaning. This can be done in a variety of ways. For one thing, the quality of the relationship between the D-J and audience can become the explicit focus for comment, as in the following where the exact degree of formality adopted by a correspondent is used as a topical resource.

4. I love these informal ways that you're writing to me  
now forget the dears you know dears are a thing of  
the past I mean it's just so formal - just put HEY::  
howya doing or summin like that you know (0.3) e  
especially when you're writing to your bank go:: -  
HEY:: howya doing boss you know gonna give me the  
dosh or what (0.3) simple (0.3)  
er anyway Bob says just thought I'd write  
[Radio 1: Simon Bates]

The focus here is not only on the precise address term appropriate for the level of formality; there is also a curious conflation of two normally distinct modes - the spoken and the written (Bob says just thought I'd write) - so that Bob is described as speaking even when it is his writing that is being reported. This playing with the medium through which the audience and the institution are made present to



each other is a feature to which we return later in the paper. It is in ways such as this, however, that the relationship of the audience to broadcasting institution is explicitly foregrounded in the talk itself.

Foregrounding the audience within the talk is carried less explicitly but more pervasively by repetitive use of direct address through the second person pronoun, 'YOU'. In many cases, this may be taken straightforwardly as referring to the listening public as a collective whole. Its field of reference, however, is frequently narrowed down, specified and re-specified, by the use of accompanying 'selectors' and 'selecting expressions'«e»

Thus, 'YOU' may be identified by region;

5. coming up  
some information *for anyone listening in Edinburgh*  
because I need your legs your hands your arms  
and the rest of you tomorrow morning in Princes Street  
nine thirty  
tell you about it after this

6. and er I don't know about where you are probably  
*if you're nnn sort of in Scotland at the moment*  
you got some quite nice weather  
but in London it's really dark and doomy

by occupation;

7. and *anyone who's a typist in a hospital*  
and has to read that writing by doctors  
congratulations

by event;

8. *if it's your birthday today*  
then you share it with all those people

9. *if it's your birthday today*  
here's where your birthday file starts  
with your Horriblescope  
comin up in just a second

by age, or other characteristics;

10. now *if your healthy and over ten years old*  
(I emphasise that 'cos the one thing I don't wanna er  
anybody to do  
is to get sick as a result of doing it)

on friday november fifteenth might be a nice idea  
if you just don't eat

by star sign;

11. *hello Scorpio*  
although it takes a considerable amount of courage to  
realise  
a cycle or a chapter in your life has already come to  
close  
you must now face up to situations as they really are

and by proper name

12. *Alison and Liz* you are now official listeners  
for ward eighteen

*Ian Schlessor* hello happy birthday to you

you are now *Marjorie*  
the official radio one listener for Princess Street

yeh okay then *Bob Sproat* in er Worcestershire er ..  
T-shirt on the way to you

And, of course, these occur not only singly but also in combination.

They range in specificity from the fairly general (by region) to the highly restrictive (by name). The field of reference of 'YOU' is thereby constantly shifting: the public is not constructed by the institution as a single monolithic and undifferentiated entity, despite occasional claims that radio DJ's particularly personalised set towards their audience amounts to their addressing themselves to 'a single imaginary listener'. This would seem to be an oversimplification in the light of comments such as the following from the broadcasters themselves:

What the target audience is changes at different times of the day. For instance, in the early morning you've got whole families able to listen in until 9 to 9.30. Afterwards, Simon Bates is targeting to people listening in their own houses -- that has to be generically housewives. At lunchtime Gary Davies can broaden it out a bit more as the youngsters can listen to it in their school break.....  
[Johnny Beerling, Controller Radio 1, Observer 23 February 1986]

Close examination of the operation of direct address serves to

reinforce this sense of a variegated and differentiated audience: it is very clear that the identified recipient(s) of the discourse change in practice from moment to moment.

Identification by selectors and selecting expressions may be virtual rather actual: it is noticeable that in many cases selectors or selecting expressions are incorporated into conditional clauses such as

*if you're nnn sort of in Scotland at the moment*

*if it's your birthday today*

*if you're healthy and over ten years old*

Selectors can also be built around the so-called indefinite pronoun, as in

*anyone who's a typist in a hospital*

*anyone listening in Edinburgh*

One effect of this is to make the mode of address, even where it is direct by virtue of 'YOU', at the same time conditional or hypothetical. Hypothetical selection is most likely to be adopted for address to defined, but large scale, segments of the putative audience. It is not likely to be adopted for direct address to the audience as a whole; nor is it commonly used for address to specific individuals.

At the same time as it is possible to render direct address hypothetical by the use of conditionals or indefinite pronouns, it is also possible, conversely, for it to be accentuated when it occurs with a range of particularly interactive speech acts such as greetings, questions, and commands. The use of greetings is more likely to co-occur with more restrictive forms of selectional expression - proper names would be the clearest case, as can be seen in the following:



.....*hi* to Bob Sproat....  
....Ian Schlessler *hello* happy birthday....  
....official listeners *hi*....  
....*hello* Scorpio....

Greetings accentuate direct address inasmuch as the most obvious everyday use of a greetings token is to open an encounter of a reciprocal kind under conditions where participants are mutually present to each other in some way. Outside radio DJ talk, in situations of actual copresence, greetings are strongly predictive of the kind of next turn available to the recipient. Sequentially, they implicate a greetings token in reply: so much so that the failure to supply something that can be interpreted as a return greeting will count under conversational conditions as a notable and noticeable absence. Accordingly, it is something of a curiosity that DJ talk should quite commonly be interspersed with such items, given its monologic character and the absence of actual reciprocal co-presence between the DJ and audience. In effect, absent recipients are here treated as *if* co-present in a continual reopening of the discourse. By combining greetings tokens with selectors, new addressees are being continually greeted into the discourse, as if they were capable of responding: all the more so because of the presence of utterances such as the following:

16. ...how's Virgo going?...  
...what's the gossip today?...  
...have you noticed the penny for the guy things are starting to appear?..  
...can you see that?...

...just put HEY:: howya doing or summin like that...  
...stop that it's dirty...  
...listen...  
...but here hang on...

In strict formal terms these would count as instances of interrogatives and imperatives, respectively. As with the case of greetings, these set up strong constraints for a responding move of a predictable type - whether this be a verbal or an action response. Even though DJ talk

largely consists of extended monologue to an absent public who are not in a position to supply the appropriate discursive responses, both interrogatives and imperatives are quite common. Their occurrence seems to be a way of implicating an audience reaction. Indeed, there is a high degree of overlap with those features that McIntosh (1963) refers to as 'markers of involvement':

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Apart from the use of second person pronouns, the main markers which indicate such involvement of the hearer are: (1) the use of *we*, *us*, *our*, etc.; (2) vocatives; (3) questions; (4) imperatives.

Inasmuch as they imply conditions under which an audience could respond they are closely related to a further extension of direct address - referring to features of the spatial organisation of the context as if they were visible to the audience.

#### 4.0 SIMULATING CO-PRESENCE: SPATIAL DEIXIS

Referring to conditions of co-presence may be done in a variety of ways. The absence of co-presence may be made the explicit focus of attention, as in:

17. I wish you could see this place  
its full of disc jockeys getting themselves all made  
up  
and looking nice

Or co-presence may expressly be simulated, as in:

18. er got my pumpkin in the studio here  
i(t)s really good (I) got a real pumpkin honestly  
I mean you probably think that I'm ninety  
but here hang on  
let me just hold this up in front of the microphone  
so that you can see my pumpkin  
can you see that  
a real Halloween pumpkin

There are references here through spatial deixis to the immediate environment of the speaker ('this place', 'pumpkin here') as if the details were visible to the audience ('can you see that'). In one respect this may be seen as playing with properties of the medium -

treating an exclusively aural medium as if it had a visual dimension. In other respects, however, it can be understood as a device for claiming proximity of relationship between speaker and audience - especially when proximate deixis is adopted alongside injunctions 'to see'. This combination of spatial deixis and visual reference implies or claims a form of co-presence - a common visual field - even when we recognise the playful element. And the claims for co-presence may themselves be understood as a kind of metaphor, not just for spatial proximity, but also for social familiarity.

#### 5.0 POSITIONING THE AUDIENCE

All of these features - direct address coupled with selectors, interrogatives and imperatives - are ways of implicating the audience. The audience, however, is not uniformly implicated all in the same way the whole of the time. Admittedly, when direct address is adopted without an accompanying selector the utterance may be understood as addressed to the audience as a whole. But, when it is deployed with restrictive selectors, at the same moment as one particular constituency of the audience is picked out as the recipient of the utterance other components of the audience are actually by this very process excluded from direct address and cast into the role of overhearing recipients of an utterance directed elsewhere. Thus, while the use of selectors has the effect of singling out sometimes quite specific addressees, the talk is always available for others than those directly named as addressees. There can at the very least be a kind of bifurcation between those whom the talk directly addresses and those for whom it is intended, as in the following:

19.           okay Fleet Street  
              [they're all awake now]  
              I have news of a rock star



The ostensible addressees of example 19 are print journalists, (metonymically identified as "Fleet Street"). Interpolated within it, however, is a comment ("they're all awake now") which refers to these same journalists in the third person, and thus redirects the utterance at that moment to alternative segments of the audience.

Another instance of bifurcation of addressee can be detected in the following example:

20.       Libra  
          [oi Libra stop that it's dirty]  
          Libra let partners ....

Initially in the fragment, "Libra" is used to identify a segment of the audience 'out there', viz. 'Librans' - anyone with a birthdate between Sept. 23 and Oct. 24. It is then used to address one, individual, uninhibited Libra fictionally constituted as co-present to the speaker - as somehow within the speaker's visual field ("stop that it's dirty"). Then the fragment switches back to address Librans in general. The discourse shifts its alignment with the audience by continually addressing different segments within it. Members of the audience are thereby cast and recast into different positions: any listener may vary from being addressed directly in particular terms, to being addressed directly in general terms, to being some kind of non-addressed recipient of the talk.

Despite relegating substantial sections of the audience to the status of overhearers, it does not seem that the use of selectors - even of the more specific kind - actually reduces the capacity of the discourse to engage the audience in general. On the contrary, the combination of selectors with greetings and with direct address would seem to be part

of the way in which a relatively dynamic relationship is achieved  
between the discourse and its broadcast audience.

#### 6.0 DIRECT ADDRESS IN LYRIC POETRY

In this way, the degree and intensity of direct address may well prove to be a criterial feature of differing generic modes: documentaries and news broadcasts, for example, may well avoid direct verbal address to audience - except for the suggestion of it in greetings and valedictions that accompany evening news programmes. Party political broadcasts, children's TV, and populist print journalism on the other hand may well adopt direct address to audience, and use it, not only with imperatives and interrogatives, but also with exclamatives; and it is more likely to be found in advertising copy in the less glossy women's magazine than the glossy fashion mag. Thus, interesting similarities and differences may be observed between genres in the way they deploy direct address. It is instructive, for example, to consider some the differences and resemblances between Renaissance lyric-dramatic poetry and DJ talk in their respective uses of direct address. John Donne's poems, for instance, commonly open with an interrogative or an imperative

21. a      Go      and      catch      a      falling      star...  
          [Imperative]

21. b      For      God's      sake      hold      your      tongue...  
          [Imperative]

21. c      Thou hast made me , and shall thy work decay?..  
          [Interrogative]

They are also strong in spatial deixis, constantly referring outwards to  
a putative context through the use of items such as 'this', 'that',  
'these', 'those', 'here', 'there'. And just as spatial deixis in Donne tends  
to be proximal rather than distal, so too the temporal deixis in terms

of tense tends to be present rather than past. Many these features  
coalesce in the opening of his poem *The Flea*:

22.       Marke but this flea, and marke in this,  
          How little that which thou deny'st me is;  
          It suck'd me first, and now sucks thee,  
          And in this flea, our two bloods mingled bee;  
          Thou know'st that this cannot be said  
          A sinne, nor shame, nor losse of maidenhead,  
              Yet this enjoyes before it wooe,  
              And pamper'd swells with one blood made of two,  
              And this, alas, is more than wee would doe.

Direct address is adopted by virtue of the second person pronoun 'thou' and is accentuated by the opening imperative 'Marke but this flea'; proximate deixis is adopted to refer to events and objects ('this flea') as if immediately present to the implied speaker and to the directly addressed recipient; and, finally, the use of present tense ('now sucks thee') implies that some of the events are taking place at the moment of utterance. In this way the poem opens in a manner which strongly implies that the objects and events which it describes are co-present to both speaker and directly addressed recipient. It is, of course, a commonplace of criticism that Donne's poetry plunges us *in medias res*. But it needs to be emphasised that it is not we as readers who are directly addressed, nor is it we as readers who are thereby assumed to be co-present with the action. Thus, if we are plunged *in medias res* it is as eavesdroppers on an utterance that is actually directed elsewhere. Indeed it is highly unusual for poetry of this period to actually explicitly and directly address the reader, except in the context of epitaphs such as:

23.       *On Elizabeth L. H.*

          Wouldst thou hear what Man can say  
          In a little? Reader stay.  
          ....

24.       *On Salathiel Pavy*  
          *A child of Queen Elizabeth's chapel*



Weep with me, all you that read  
This little story;  
....

Otherwise, and more typically, the reader is ruled out as the focus of direct address, not only because of the assumption of co-presence, but also because the first marker of direct address in the poem is commonly associated with the use of a selecting expression - such as *deare love* or *sweetest love* in the following examples:

25. THE DREAME  
*Deare love*, for nothing lesse than *thee*  
Would I have broke this happy dreame,  
. . . . .

26. SONG  
*Sweetest love*, I do not goe,  
For weariness of *thee*,  
. . . . .

27. A VALEDICTION: OF THE BOOKE  
I'll tell *theenow* (*deare Love*) what thou shall doe  
To anger destiny, as she doth us,  
. . . . .

These selectors have the paradoxical effect of both emphasising the direct address, whilst at the same time removing any possible ambiguity at the onset of the text that it might actually be addressed to the reader. Sometimes, of course, the published title also helps to bracket off the reader as a possible focus of the direct address:

28. Elegie: To his Mistris Going to Bed  
Come, *Madame*, come, all rest my powers defie,  
Until I labour, I in labour lye.  
<DONNE>

29. To his Coy Mistress  
Had we but world enough, and time,  
This coyness, *Lady*, were no crime.  
<MARVELL>

In some respects, therefore, there is a similarity between lyric dramatic poetry of this type and D-J talk. Both use highly involving modes of direct address. They differ, however, inasmuch as the addressee of dramatic-lyric poetry is almost always someone other than

the actual reader of the text, whereas with DJ talk the addressee can in fact coincide with the listening public as a whole or with restricted segments of it. With DJ talk we may well be cast in the role of overhearing recipient of talk addressed elsewhere; but the talk also carries the continual expectation of address to us as members of the listening public. This can hardly be said to be the case with lyric poetry, where it is something of a surprise if the focus of the direct address turns out to be the reader.

It is also significant, of course, who actually is addressed in direct terms by such poetry because it is clearly possible to detect shifts in its focus over historical time. In the renaissance period it tends to be an object of passionate regard such as the lover (as in the examples above), or God (as with the example below).

30.

XIV

Batter my heart, three person'd God; for *you*  
As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend;

In the Romantic period, however, the focus shifts to elements of the natural world - a rose, nightingale, skylark, or tiger - as in the following:<sup>69</sup>

31. O Rose, *thou* art sick!

32. O WILD West Wind, *thou* breath of Autumn's being,

33 Tyger! Tyger! burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame *thy* fearful symmetry?

Or, alternatively, it becomes an abstraction (Intellectual Beauty), a mythic figure (Psyche), or an artefact (A Grecian Urn). The address tends to be declamatory, as in the following

34. Hail to *thee*, blithe spirit!

And it often involves the use of exclamation marks (Tyger!), vocative

particles (*O Rose*). In combination, these features produce a form of direct address that is more public than the apparently intimate address of the examples cited from the Renaissance. Indeed, it is as if direct address in Romantic poetry is projected out into a world curiously devoid of conscious personality; or, alternatively, it aims at conferring conscious personality on ordinarily non-conscious reality. <sup>10</sup>

Whilst the direct address of the Romantic Ode tends towards public declamation, rather than the private outburst of the Renaissance, it would still seem to be the case that the reader is placed in an overhearing relation. Thus, despite the shift in characteristic 'focus' or 'object' of the address, the position of the reader remains similar. Indeed, what seems to characterise the poetry considered above is that, while it may be strong in direct address, it often marks this address as clearly directed away from the reader towards a wide range of potential addressees (objects, persons, divinities) none of whom need exist for the poem to be effective.

### *7.0 Towards a sociology of genre: the formation of publics*

At the outset of this paper I argued that since discourse stylistics emphasises the situated character of utterance it thereby opens itself as a mode of enquiry to social and historical questions. A suggestive example is provided by Raymond Williams in his account of the soliloquy in Renaissance Drama. In discussing the 'formal' properties of the soliloquy, he argues that the movement to more complex forms - as in the self address of Faustus, or the enactment of inner conflict in Hamlet - amounts to more than merely a series of formal innovations.

Rather are these developments

"inseparable from new conceptions of personality and new senses of the limits and contradictions of available social relations."

[Williams, R. 1981; 141]



It is not so much that formal innovation in this sense reflects shifts in the wider society in some more or less direct fashion. It is rather that

"the formal innovation is a true and integral element of the changes themselves: an articulation, by technical discovery, of changes in consciousness which are themselves forms of consciousness of change."

[op.cit.: 142]

Indeed, for Williams, developments within the soliloquy enact

"new conceptions of the autonomous or relatively autonomous individual, new senses of the tensions between such an individual and an assigned or expected social role..."

[op.cit.: 142]

In this sense,

"to analyse the soliloquy in English Renaissance drama is necessarily, first, a matter of formal analysis, but not as a way of denying or making irrelevant a social analysis; rather as a new and technically rigorous kind of social analysis of *this* social practice."

[op.cit.: 142]

Although Williams describes the soliloquy as a form, it could perhaps be more appropriately described as a genre or sub-genre consisting of a configuration of discursive practices, including properties such as 'address to self for overhearing audience'. Such properties suggest a point of comparison with the examples of direct address which have been the main focus of discussion so far. Indeed, Williams's comments point towards a way of articulating 'formal features' or a particular discursive practice at one moment of analysis with consideration of social relations in another moment of analysis, seen here principally in terms of the formation of a public.

The interconnectedness of moments or levels of analysis may be sketched as follows. At the textual level the adoption of strong direct address is realised by selection within the formal possibilities of the language system - the second person pronoun, interrogatives,

imperatives, proximate deixis, and so on. The significance of such selections, however, lies in the way they are productive of certain kinds of audience-text relationship. Analysis, thereby, moves from consideration of form to issues of contextual pragmatics - how the forms work in context. Thus, whilst both Renaissance lyric poetry and D-J talk may be strong in direct address, quite similar forms can have variable effects. The direct address of the Renaissance lyric is not towards its readership, whereas the address of D-J talk is towards its audience - though not to all of it all of the time. It is my contention that both the presence and absence of direct address, and variations in the type adopted, are sensitive indicators of genre and generic shift. At the same time, however, I would want to argue that what is being worked through in these generic shifts is not merely an audience-text relation but fundamentally the formation of publics and ultimately the public sphere itself. It is no accident, for example, that the poems of Donne, in which the direct address has the force of private outburst, were read primarily in manuscript form during his lifetime, circulating amongst his friends and acquaintances. By the time of his death, however, the social relations of literary production are undergoing transformation.

Between 1630 and 1640 the total annual production of books rose from about 460 to nearly 600. By the time the Romantic poets begin to emerge, literary production has been transformed into a form of commodity production for a relatively large, anonymous market. In 1810, for example, a single publisher is issuing 25 titles in a year in fiction alone. As the whole organisation of literary production changes, writing has to negotiate and enact a very altered relationship with its

public. The shift towards a more declamatory but simultaneously impersonal mode of address in the Romantic Ode - indeed the very re-adoption and development of this genre - needs to be seen in this light. Hence also, of course, the peculiar ambivalence exhibited by the Romantics towards their public. At one moment the poet should be a 'man speaking to men' (Wordsworth); at another moment they can declare 'I never wrote one single line of Poetry with the least Shadow of public thought' (Keats); or yet again, 'a poet is a nightingale (according to Shelley) who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds - his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician..' In the mode of address adopted in the odes, it is emphatically the latter perspective that wins through - the reader is constructed as an auditor of an utterance addressed impersonally elsewhere to some non-human phenomenon. ["O Wild West Wind, thou breath.."] I think this is very clearly in Williams words "an articulation, by technical discovery, of changes in consciousness which are themselves forms of consciousness of change" - in this case a shifting pattern and focus of direct address on the one hand in relation to the institution and development of a totally altered kind of public which has changed from the personal coterie to the anonymous market. Indeed, even in Donne's lyric poems there are anticipations of the shift at work, especially if one considers the relation between title and first line - as in following example:

Elegie: To *his* Mistris Going to Bed  
Come *Madame*, come, all rest my powers defie,

In the instant transition to second person direct address from the third person of the title we step, as it were, from the public domain to the private. The third person of the title is a way of mediating between the two spheres.'''



Under very different institutional conditions, in a different discursive domain, and at a different historical moment we can see comparable processes at work. Disc jockey talk on broadcast radio is, as we have seen, strong in direct address. As with lyric poetry it articulates a quite specific relationship with its public. Of course, a disc jockey is not a poet; and BBC radio one does not have the same relationship with its public as a publishing house. Unlike a publishing house it does not produce a commodity for the market (although there are, it should be noted, pressures from commercial radio and through the licence fee to reach the largest possible audience). As with print, however, the relationship is a mediated one in which participants - addresser and addressee - are, by and large, not co-present to each other; but in each case, direct address may be used on occasion as part of utterances which simulate co-presence. For disc jockey talk, however, there is always potential for the listener to become the focus of direct address, even at moments when it is actually focussed elsewhere. In this way radio disc jockey talk often dramatises the existence of the audience to its individual components. Its use of direct address with specific selection is precisely a device for doing this. Certainly, popular radio has also evolved a variety of strategies for including the voices of its audience within the discourse itself - through readers letters, quiz spots, phone-ins and so on. As a particular genre within a particular medium it seems to be one that has developed the capacity to merge the public and the private - or, at least, to erase the distance between the two. In this particular genre of broadcast talk it is as if the sphere of the public is being collapsed back into private interaction.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

A fundamental concern of this paper has been to move beyond the limitations of purely formal, textual/stylistic analysis. This is not because such work lacks legitimacy or interest; but its achievements remain primarily descriptive ones about the internal linguistic economy of text. It is not easy to move from such insights to explanatory claims about the relationship between the features so described and the broader social and cultural context. Focussing on direct address, however, is intended to represent a rather different kind of analytic move. It begins with a set of linguistic forms - person deixis, imperative, interrogative, etc. - but ones chosen for their contextually-oriented, pragmatic implications. They are singled out as an interrelated set, because they encode a textual orientation towards a recipient, real or implied. This point of analytic departure, therefore, amounts to isolating a discursive practice - one which I believe to be particularly sensitive to the precise conditions of co-presence under which texts are produced. As such, it is a discursive practice, which in written, printed or broadcast texts, not only articulates an orientation to their respective audiences, but points towards features of the discursive institutional domain in which such texts are produced and consumed. This paper is thus intended to illustrate a theoretical claim - that it is possible, by focussing on this type of discursive practice, to relate genres of discourse to their respective discursive domains in a principled and insightful way.

FOOTNOTES:

- (1) Ohman (1970); Halliday (1971); Hasan (1985) may be seen as fairly typical examples of this approach
- (2) See, for example, Halliday & Hasan (1976)
- (3) See, for example, Sinclair & Coulthard (1975), Labov & Fanshel (1977). It is noticeable that even though each of these accounts focuses on a particular situation, both are concerned to establish general principles of coherence that will obtain across an indefinite range of situation types. Hence, for example, the subsequent publication of *Exchange Structure* (Coulthard and Brazil, 1979) which attempts to establish a fundamental discourse structure - a kind of discourse universal. Brown & Yule's book, *Discourse Analysis*, purports to be a survey of both strands of work within this tradition. Interestingly, however, it lays most emphasis on work on intersentential connection.
- (4) For the purpose of this paper I use discursive domain to refer to a field which is kept in place by various institutional supports such as social relations of production and other social practices. Since some of these practices are extra-discursive it is reasonable to conceptualise them as providing a space for the institution of particular discursive practices. Each discourse genre is an ensemble or distinctive configuration of particular discursive practices, which have achieved this specific disposition as an expression or articulation of the domain in which it operates. Thus 'cross-examination' is a discourse genre made up of a number of discursive practices such as 'challenge', 'accusation'



etc., which operate in the discursive domain provided by 'the law'. Similarly, the novel is a particular discourse genre constituted by a number of discursive practices including 'narration', 'reported speech' etc., which have achieved this disposition as an expression of 'the literary' and thus operates in a domain organised by the activities of publishers, schools, exam boards, and so on.

(5) An extremely thorough and searching account of the problems of formalist stylistics may be found in Pratt's (1977) study *Towards a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse*. Fish (1980) also makes similar points in a polemical vein. While both acknowledge the interest and relevance of non-literary discourse, neither of these accounts subjects it to sustained attention, nor addresses much the institutional contexts of discourse as socio-historical phenomena. Fish's 'community of readers' is an idealised construct imported out of theoretical necessity and lacking in any kind of historical or empirical content. This chapter attempts to find a way of blending interest in the literary and non-literary as discourse with a serious attempt to trace connections with specific readerships or audiences. Discussions of the notion of discourse stylistics may also be found in Coupland, 1988

(6) The materials on which this section of the paper is based are transcribed recordings of the pattern that takes place between records of popular music as played during the morning and early afternoon on BBC Radio One. It excludes lengthy material supplied by the audience, news bulletins and phone-ins. The discussion of DJ discourse is re-worked from part of a previously published paper on this topic. See Montgomery, 1986, and Chapter Six above.

(7) op.cit. 425

(8) The term *selectors* is drawn from Ervin-Tripp (1972), though its use here is somewhat different than in her work, where it refers to a sociolinguistic encoding of a status attribute of the person addressed. Here the term is used to designate an expression which helps to specify the field of reference of the second person pronoun, but this expression need not necessarily incorporate status <sup>t</sup>attributes.

(9) An interesting discussion of this kind of feature may be <sup>found in</sup> Culler's (1981) account of the apostrophe.

(10) Although this can be seen in terms of the revival of generic conventions from the Ode of classical antiquity, it is still curious why these conventions should be revived or reworked specifically by the Romantics, so that the Ode becomes for them a common and preferred genre. Whilst, for example, it is possible to find instances of quite private and personal address amongst Shelley's poetry (e.g. To Mary ----- ), these occur amongst fragmentary, unfinished texts often published posthumously. Presumably, therefore, they were not considered particularly successful during the poet's lifetime - nor since, for that matter.

(11) There is some uncertainty, of course, over whether such titles were actually penned by the original authors or added by later editors. But even if they amount to later editorial accretions, then they would seem all the more to be part of a process of translating initially 'private' documents for the public domain.

**CHAPTER EIGHT**

**'OUR TUNE'**

**A STUDY OF A DISCOURSE GENRE**

Forthcoming in:

Scannell, P. (ed)

*A Reader in Broadcast Talk*



*Each genre has the capacity to deal with only certain aspects of reality; to each belong certain principles of selection, certain manners of envisioning and conceptualising reality; each operates within a certain scale of depth and range of treatment.*

*I. R. Titunik*

*It is in the narratives of everyday life .. that .. the ideological features of discourse may be discerned.*

*J. B. Thompson*

*There is no such thing as society. There are only individuals and their families.*

*M. Thatcher*

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

A few minutes after 11.00 a.m. most weekday mornings the normal cycle of music and chat on BBC Radio One is interrupted for several minutes while the resident DJ - Simon Bates - summarises a listener's letter, using it as an extended dedication to a record which the letter requests. The letters are of a particular type. They recount personal dilemmas and emotional traumas - divorce, psychiatric breakdown, family bereavements - and Bates extemporises from them against a background of muted orchestral music from Zeferelli's *Romeo and Juliet*. Although unlisted in the schedules, the event has acquired a name and a definable slot in the morning's programme. It has also acquired a large following. It is supposed to generate 500 letters a week and attract an audience of over 10 million; and whilst there may be some doubts about the latter figure (since official BBC figures suggest a reach of 2 million) it does coincide with the peak in daily audience figures for Radio One.

As a speech performance it is interesting in a variety of ways. For one thing the discourse is doubly authored: it is delivered by Bates but as an extempore adaptation of a letter from a listener. It is therefore

projected as rooted in the real life experience of an actual member of the audience. As such it deals most often with private dilemmas, but here broadcast in the public domain to a mass audience by one of Radio One's best known disc jockeys. There are various kinds of tension present in this performance: a tension between the private world of individual experience and the public world of the broadcast event; a tension between the anonymity of the letter writer and the familiar persona of Bates; a tension between the implied narration of the letter (first person; written) and the actual narration at the moment of broadcasting itself (third person; spoken); and finally a tension between the family both as community and as the site of personal dislocation.

In this chapter I will examine how these tensions are negotiated in the discourse of Our Tune. More broadly, however, I will be concerned with how the event constitutes a particular genre within broadcasting, adopting a recognisable discursive structure with associated lexicogrammatical forms, which in turn realise particular kinds of meanings. And, since Our Tune as a genre is heavily dependent upon the rehearsal of past events, the notion of 'narrative' will constitute an important part of the approach. As narrative, Our Tune can be considered (following Culler, 1975; Chatman, 1978; Rimmon Kenan, 1983) from two from two complementary directions. From one perspective Our Tune will be seen as a set of texts which display a range of particular kinds of discursive practice, inasmuch as it variously reports narrative events, situates them, moralises about them, etc., these practices being for the most part configured in a particular sequence (for example, the playing of the record typically takes place only after the narration of core events has been completed). From this perspective, it is possible



to address and comment upon surface features of the texts themselves, inasmuch as certain kinds of discursive practice have associated with them particular patterns of lexicogrammatical selection.

From another perspective, however, Our Tune will be considered in terms of its basic story materials - the typical event line and the recurring types of actor - that comprise the substance of the narrative. The emphasis in this latter approach is less upon the 'surface' of the text, and more upon its underlying components. The shift from one perspective to the other thus corresponds loosely to a shift from a concern with how Our Tune negotiates a particular set of conditions of utterance associated with the broadcast event to a larger concern with a characteristic kind of 'content' or 'ideology' which this event mobilises.

## 2.0 'OUR TUNE' AS DISCOURSE

Despite the now extensive literature on spoken narration (see, for example, Tolson, 1989; Chafe, 1980, Polanyi 1980, 1985) Labov's (1972b) paper on 'The transformation of experience in narrative syntax' remains an important starting point, which has informed much subsequent research. (See, for example, Martin and Rothery, 1980/1; van Dijk, 1985b). Labov's discussion of spoken story-telling rests upon a crucial distinction between *narrative clauses* and *free clauses*. The former carry the basic structure of the narrative and reflect the logico-temporal order of the events depicted. The sequencing of such clauses is accordingly part of their narrative meaning and any attempt to displace or re-order them is likely to disturb the overall trajectory of the story. If narrative clauses establish the basic logico-temporal sequence of the story, 'free clauses', on the other hand, perform important contextual and evaluative work around this basic structure:



and they are 'free', inasmuch as there do not seem to be the same positional constraints on their placement.

In addition, Labov proposed that the oral narratives tend to display a determinate shape dependent upon the ordering of different types of discursive activity. These he enumerates as follows:

- 1) *Abstract*
- 2) *Orientation*
- 3) *Complicating Action*
- 4) *Evaluation*
- 5) *Result or resolution*
- 6) *Coda*

Thus, the discourse of the narrative does different things at different points in its narration. An *Abstract* may occur at the beginning of the narrative in the form of one or two clauses briefly summarizing the whole story. An *Orientation* will follow an abstract (if the latter occurs) and will set the scene for the story in terms of time, persons and circumstances. The *Complicating Action* and the *Resolution* must be realised by narrative clauses and provide the crucial components of the narrative inasmuch as they spell out its event line. *Codas* occur at the end of the narrative and "have the property of bridging the gap between the moment of time at the end of the narrative proper and the present. They bring the narrator and the listener back to the point at which they entered the narrative." (365) *Codas* also set up no predictions for further narrative events and so do not prompt the question 'and then what happened?'. *Evaluations* are more difficult to define. Labov describes them as places 'in which the action is suspended while elaborate arguments are developed' (369). In Labov's examples these not untypically take the form of reported speech; and, more

generally, he emphasises that they are crucial components of narratives of personal experience.

Complication and Resolution, according to this account, are obligatory elements of the discursive structure of the narrative. The remaining elements are optional. Amongst these the Abstract and the Coda have positional constraints upon them, such that the former tends to occupy initial position in the narrative text, whereas the latter occupies final position. Orientations and Evaluations, however, are less positionally constrained. Nonetheless, it is possible to suggest that, inasmuch as Orientations are prospective in their purpose, they are likely to precede the first narrative event, even though successive Re-Orientations may take place as the narrative unfolds, especially as new Complicating Actions are introduced. And it is also possible to suggest that inasmuch as Evaluations operate retrospectively on narrative events they are likely to occur after Complicating Actions and Resolutions. Generally, it would seem to be the case that the discourse of spoken narration can switch into and out of Orientations and Evaluations as the narrative unfolds.

Some of the core elements of Labov's scheme provide an immediately relevant starting point for the specification of some of the generic properties of Our Tune. I shall adopt them as an initial framework and modify or develop them in the discussion of specific examples.

## *2.1 TENSE MARKING AND NARRATION IN OUR TUNE*

In Our Tune the basic event line of the narrative is provided by main clauses in the simple past tense where, typically, the verb encodes a material rather than a relational process - what Halliday (1985) terms

'a process of doing' rather than of 'being' or 'having'. In addition to the use of the simple past tense, the encoded event should exhibit a clear temporally-bounded character. Exceptionally, clauses where the main verb encodes a mental or verbal process may also carry the event line. Examples of the event line being realised in this way are thus as follows:

---

*her parents split up*

---

*she discovered that the woman who was in bed with husband was the mother of one of his children*

---

*she found a lump*

---

*she was told she would have to have a mastectomy*

---

All of these are treated as instances of a narrative clause. Also included in this category would be verb constructions of the inceptive type ('started to ..', 'began to ..') Thus, examples such as

---

*things started to go wrong*

---

*divorce proceedings started*

---

both count as narrative clauses.

Other kinds of tenses clearly play a pervasive role in the discourse of

Our Tune: e.g -

present;	<i>the sister is now expecting the first child</i>
past continuous;	<i>they were living together</i>
past perfect;	<i>the divorce hadn't gone through</i>
past perfect continuous;	<i>they had been struggling to make ends meet</i>

These, however, are prototypically associated with free clauses rather than strict narrative clauses. As such they tend to provide an explanatory framework for narrative clauses that develop the core event line of the narrative.



## 2.2 NARRATIVE CLAUSES AND THE EVENT-LINE OF THE STORY

For any particular instance of Our Tune, it is possible to display the basic skeleton of the story in terms of its event-line, by isolating out the narrative clauses in the order in which they occur. Thus Maxine's story in one Our Tune is carried by the following narrative clauses:

*(a happy family initially)*

1. *and then things started to go wrong*
2. *and almost inevitably her parents split up*
3. *one day Mum just got up and walked out*
4. *after a while .. (Dad).. met someone else*
5. *and brought the lady home for them to meet*
6. *and after a while they settled down*
7. *and then out of the bushes and out of the blue .. Mum reappeared back on the scene*
8. *and so she (Joan/the lady) left*
9. *so Mum came back*
10. *and to be honest it didn't work out*
11. *divorce proceedings started*
12. *and .. (Joan/the lady) .. reappeared*
13. *and picked up the pieces*
14. *and so .. they got married*  
*(and although the family's been hurt*  
*by sticking together*  
*they've won out)*

Significantly, this simple series of 14 narrative clauses from different points in the narration of Our Tune seems clearly ordered in terms of Complicating Actions and Resolutions. Thus:

---

### COMPLICATION 1

1. *and then things started to go wrong*
2. *and almost inevitably her parents split up*
3. *one day Mum just got up and walked out*

---

### RESOLUTION 1

4. *after a while .. (Dad).. met someone else*
5. *and brought the lady home for them to meet*
6. *and after a while they settled down*

---

### COMPLICATION 2

7. *and then out of the bushes and out of the blue .. Mum reappeared back on the scene*

---

### RESOLUTION 2

8. *and so she (Joan/the lady) left*
9. *so Mum came back*

---

### COMPLICATION 3

10. *and to be honest it didn't work out*
  11. *divorce proceedings started*
-

*RESOLUTION 3*

*12. and .. (Joan/the lady) .. reappeared*

*13. and picked up the pieces*

*14. and so .. they (Dad + Joan) got married*

---

The specific nature of the Complications and the Resolutions in Our Tune is clearly of great interest, not the least because they tend to be drawn from a rather narrow range of possibilities, as we shall see below (§ 5.1). We may note in passing, however, that in this particular instance the relationship of the first Complication to the last Resolution fits neatly into the kind of structural homology proposed by Greimas, whereby:

*THE INITIAL SITUATION : THE FINAL SITUATION :: THE COMPLICATION : THE RESOLUTION*

*'A happy family' : 'A happy family' :: Mum leaves home : Dad re-marries*

But, if extracting the narrative clauses enables the Complication + Resolution structure of the narrative to be displayed, it does clearly pose a problem concerning the relation of the narrative clauses to the total text of any Our Tune. Although the event-line is the most central constituting feature of the genre, it accounts for only a relatively small proportion of any individual text produced within that genre. In effect, the discourse of Our Tune is concerned with much more than laying down the basic event-line.

The free clauses of Our Tune are concerned with two broad types of activity: (a) organising the structure of the discursive event itself, and (b) managing its reception by the audience. More particularly, it is possible to distinguish (in addition to Complication + Resolution) the following components of Our Tune as a total discursive event.

## 2.3 THE DISCOURSE STRUCTURE OF OUR TUNE

### 2.3.1 FRAMING

Although Our Tune is not mentioned in published notices of 'what's on' Radio One, it does occupy a recognisable slot in Simon Bates' morning show. It commonly occurs around 11.00 a.m. which is almost exactly half-way through Bates' programme; and during the course of the first part of Bates' show references are made to it as an upcoming item. As a discursive event various techniques are used to separate it from rest of the medley of music and chat. Narration takes place against a background of orchestral 'theme' music, so that the onset of this music is itself a signal that Our Tune is about to begin. And continuation of the theme music is an enduring signal of the switch from desultory patter to sustained narrative monologue. In addition, there are verbal markers of the onset and termination of Our Tune. Onset is marked by utterances of the following type:

---

*this one is from the Midlands  
its from Staffordshire  
which is all anybody needs to know*

---

*this letter .. comes from the South of England  
it is from a lady called Marianne*

---

*this one comes from North of the border  
and that's all I need to say  
but I will say it comes from a lady called Lynn*

---

*and this one which is from Brian who lives in Kent  
er actually started the letter off ..*

Prototypical *FRAMING* utterances display the following format

proximate demonstrative+'one'/text reference item	copula/'comes'	'from'+location/person
this one	is	from the Midlands
this letter	comes	from the South of Eng.
this one	comes	from North of the bord
this one	is	from Brian

Apart from the obvious role of marking the onset of Our Tune as a discursive event, *FRAMING* serves important additional purposes. It helps to bracket the ensuing discourse as in some way originating from a



source outwith the broadcasting institution itself; so that attributing a source for the material by name and region is partly a way of authenticating it as the real life story of a real person from a nationally dispersed audience. At the same time withholding the full name and address of the source distinguishes it from any simple record dedication and further marks the material as potentially transgressing a boundary between private experience and the public domain ('there are some things you just don't talk about in public'), thus the full identity of the source is kept secret. Finally, it also makes possible partial disclaimers of responsibility for any offence which the material might generate.

*FRAMING* to mark the end of *Our Tune* depends upon more ritualised utterances, involving simple formulas such as:

---

*and that's Our Tune today*

---

*it's Our Tune  
Stand By Me  
Ben E. King*

---

*drop us a line  
Simon Bates  
BBC Radio One  
London VIA 4WW*

---

*it's Our Tune  
Simon Bates  
BBC Radio One  
London VIA 4WW*

---

*will you drop me a line please  
that's Nilsson  
Simon Bates  
BBC Radio One*

---

The production of these final *FRAMINGS* coincides with marked prosodic shifts by Bates. There is some increase in voice amplitude and a marked acceleration of tempo. It is also noticeable that the retrospective boundary marking performed by these *FRAMINGS* is supported by the kind

of demonstrative reference adopted, which tends to be distal rather than proximate ('that' rather than 'this'), consonant with its use anaphorically as a text reference item. And the use by the DJ of his own name, coupled with a reference to the station, seems to return the discourse unambiguously to its institutional site leaving behind the doubly authored discourse of the narrative section. Final *FRAMINGS* also tend to coincide with musical shifts in which the orchestral background 'theme' is replaced by a fade-in lead to the next record. Generally, final *FRAMINGS* reverse the priority of onset *FRAMINGS* station name rather than audience names; London rather than the regions; distal demonstratives rather than proximate; and acceleration rather than slowing of tempo.

### 2.3.2 *FOCUSSING*

Rather than use Labov's term, *Abstract*, I have adopted the term *FOCUSSING* from Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Although *FOCUSSING* usually occurs immediately after the initial *FRAMING* it does not strictly provide a prospective summary of the narrative. Instead, *FOCUSSING* provides an oblique and very general indication of what the narrative will be about. In this sense its role seems to be to suggest what kind of interpretive set needs to be adopted by the audience in finding 'the point' of the story. *FOCUSSING* may be exemplified as follows:

---

*and its a story that's very simple  
and I guess also it's a story about the way people survive things  
because you have preconceptions about divorce  
and you have preconceptions also about the way it affects kids  
and sometimes you forget about how it affects the adults as well in a family*

---

*the letter really is about her growing up  
and going through all the traumas that most people avoid  
I guess she's avoided a few herself  
but on the other hand there there's some pretty bad times in there  
and in the end coming out with a realisation that is much the same as the Mike  
the Mechanic's record  
you'll understand why when we get through it*

---

er it's about basically the way people survive from things  
and the way people come through from the other side .  
ann you'll understand it .

Thus it can be seen that *FOCUSSING* most usually takes the following form:

text reference item + copula + text reference item + copula + 'about' + topic  
It ← 's a story about  
it' 's about  
the letter (really) is about

There are several significant aspects to *FOCUSSING*. Firstly, despite the particularities of the narrative which they preface, the proposed topics are extraordinarily similar:

it's .. about the way people survive things

the letter .. is about .. her going through all the traumas  
and in the end coming out

it's about .. the way people survive from things  
and the way people come through

They are about 'going through', 'coming through' and 'out' and hence 'surviving'. At the same time, however, they are formulated at such a level of generality that they do not give much clue as to the particularities of the forthcoming narrative. To some extent then they paradoxically defeat their own apparent purpose, since they do not give the sense of the story in advance. Instead, they depend upon completion of the story for sense to be made of them. (You'll understand it; You'll understand why when we get through it.) In this way, they come close to being 'fake' focusses which project forward enigmatically over the course of the narrative, providing a kind of bait for the audience. Finally, they are commonly offered with a hedge against being taken as a definitive statement of the story's meaning:

I guess also it's a story about

er it's about basically



the letter really is about

An extreme variant of the faked and and hedged focus is the negative focus:

*this one is the kind of letter that's going to get everybody ringing in  
the phones are going to ri light up like Christmas trees basically with ladies  
er ringing in to complain that I shouldn't do it  
an(d) I can probably understand how they feel about it  
mainly because I can't grasp the import of what the lady has to say*

*.....  
but she's honest  
and that's the reason for using this Our Tune  
it's something that I can't comprehend at all  
no bloke could  
er whatever you hear people say on the radio  
the kind of people who reckon they're experts about things can't understand  
something that is exclusively female  
I don't believe it to be honest  
any more than ladies can understand things that are exclusively male either*

This kind of focus avoids projecting the topic of Our Tune, on the grounds that the material in question resists comprehension or interpretation. It is even possible to run one kind of focus into the other, as in the following

*when I first read it I thought oh here's a lady who's been through helluva lot  
and I can't quite see what she's getting at  
and then I suddenly realised  
er because the letter really is about her growing up  
and going through all the traumas that most people avoid  
I guess she's avoided a few herself  
but on the other hand there there's some pretty bad times in there  
and in the end coming out with a realisation that is much the same as the Mike  
the Mechanic's record  
you'll understand why when we get through it*

### 2.3.3 SITUATING

*SITUATING* refers to the way in which parts of the narration are devoted to defining the time and circumstances of the narrative, corresponding loosely to what Labov described as *Orientation*. This latter term, however, will be reserved for a rather different type of discursive activity in Our Tune, which Labov had little need to take

account of in his own data (see 2.3.4 below). *SITUATING* takes place after the initial *FRAMING* and *FOCUSSING* and introduces characters in a situation.

---

*starts in nineteen seventy two with a lady called Maxine  
er Mum and Dad four kids  
two boys and two girls of which maxine was the youngest  
a happy family initially*

---

*it goes back a few years  
and take maybe ten years ago  
and she was going through a tough time because her father had died  
and she was a teenager  
and he'd died suddenly and tragically  
and as a result of that she'd got a little bit maybe loose and a bit wild  
Dad had been very protective  
she'd hadn't gotten on as well maybe as she should with her Mum  
but that's two ladies living together  
and she had a brother  
and the focus of the Mum went on to the brother  
so I guess Marianne went a little haywire  
she had a few pennies which her father had left her*

---

*her name is Marie  
she lives in Burnley in Lancashire  
she is twenty seven years old  
she is divorced  
she has a three four year old little boy  
and she hasn't been the luckiest person in the world  
but she's honest*

*now this lady is an honest person  
she's also a person who's been through a great deal  
an(d) as she says some of it is her own fault*

---

*after splitting with her husband she lived with her parents for ten months  
and she finally managed to get a little house , for her son  
and she , and she's the kind of person who is fiercely protective  
and the kind of person also who's determined to do things on her own  
now it looked pretty good 'cos when she got the little house she had a job an(d)  
she had a roof over her head an(d) it was her own and it looked like she could  
relax a little bit and get on with life  
now what is also true reading between the lines is that this lady is fairly  
lonely  
she hasn't got a fella around  
she hasn't time  
and she cares about her kid enough to be in every night  
and that means it's the black n white television and not a great deal of money  
I would think reading between the lines that means that sometimes in the winter  
the heating isn't always on  
an(d) all she cares about is making sure that her three four year old kid has  
got the clothes and got the right things in his life  
but it was independence*

---



*SITUATING* occurs obligatorily after the initial *FRAMING* and *FOCUSSING*, even though it is distinguished by free rather than narrative clauses. When free clauses are *SITUATING*, they tend to figure relational processes rather than material and mental processes and tend to select present tense or past continuous, past perfect, or past perfect continuous rather than simple past tense. Thus:

---

*she lives in Burnley in Lancashire*

---

*she is twenty seven years old*

---

*and she was going through a tough time because her father had died  
and she was a teenager*

---

A distinctive feature of *SITUATING* is the way in which they are used to introduce the basic actants of the narrative, as in the following:

---

*er Mum and Dad four kids  
two boys and two girls of which Maxine was the youngest  
a happy family initially*

---

or:

---

*she is twenty seven years old  
she is divorced  
she has a three four year old little boy*

---

It is precisely this tendency that motivates the choice of the term since *SITUATING* does effectively delineate the baseline situation out of which the event-line of complication and resolution will spring. The subsequent evolution of the event-line in narrative clauses, however, does force changes in the initial situation to such an extent that subsequent portions of the narrative become devoted to *RE-SITUATING* the action. *RE-SITUATING*, amongst other things, is used to fill in background on new characters or to update on actions involving other established characters, and leads to the following kinds of utterance:

---

*er the sister  
the elder sister  
became the person who looked after everybody  
doing as much cooking and cleaning as she could as well as going to school*



*but it was Dad who brought home the bacon  
and Dad who was always there  
and Dad who sorted out problems  
and Dad who was up till all hours making darn certain that everything was okay  
in the house and making certain that there was a baby-sitter there if he was out  
working or whatever .*

---

*by this time really her daughter had become her mother's daughter  
if you understand what I mean  
the mother was looking after her constantly  
and the daughter looked to her grandmother  
not to her real Mum  
for everything*

---

*er this fella was Chris  
he was a friendly guy  
and he wasn't a whirlwind romance  
he wasn't a torrid affair  
they didn't jump into bed at the first sight of each other  
he was just going through a separation which was leading towards a divorce*

---

*RE-SITUATING*, therefore, is a constant concern of the discourse and its presence certainly outweighs that of the event-line in *Our Tune*. One striking aspect of the examples given above is the emphasis they accord to relationships between actants within the narrative. These seem invariably to be characterised in familial terms, especially if we take this to include entry to the family through birth, romance or marriage; or exit from the family via death, separation or divorce. The event-line is important, of course, because it is this precisely that provides the catalyst for change of state from one situation to another. But a major interest of *Our Tune* is in the quality of relationships of a familial type around the central protagonist - usually the Epistolary Narrator.

#### **2.3.4 ORIENTATION**

Although the term is used by Labov to refer to the kinds of narrative work handled above under the notion of *SITUATING*, I have preferred to reserve its use for cases where free clauses are used to orient the audience behind the experience of a character, or where they are used to anticipate some likely or possible audience reaction. Indeed, it

seems possible to distinguish in this way between two contrasting types of *ORIENTATION*

*2.3.4.1 EMPATHETIC ORIENTATION:*

These involve projections by the broadcast narrator, apparently on behalf the audience, about what a particular experience must have been like for one of the actants in the narrative. Thus:

---

*you know how an atmosphere can go out of a room and up the stairs and right round a house  
and you know there's something dreadfully wrong*

---

*you can imagine the poor little four year old kid  
didn't know whether he was coming or going  
he couldn't work out why Mum was in hospital  
and why everybody was panicking and rushing around  
it was very hard*

---

*so you can imagine  
not only has she tried to top herself and got herself taken to hospital  
but now as she's recovering from that she's had the biggest blow  
or one of the biggest blows you can have*

*EMPATHETIC ORIENTATION* may thus been seen as resting upon two kinds of discursive feature. Typically they involve direct address to the audience via the second person pronoun (see Montgomery 1988). And they also involve a cognitive verb such as 'know' or 'imagine' to project the audience into a particular emotional state attributed to one of the actants in the story. Alternatively, they may be realised through the use of a modal verb, thus:

*now that must have been nerve , wracking for him in the first place  
because hhh I mean taking a lady home for kids to meet is pretty tough*

---

*and everybody does automatically think about the kids  
how terrible it must be for them  
and , I suppose it is and was*

---

*the person who suffered the greatest must have been her Dad*

---

*must have been the most difficult decision of her life  
she'd totally committed herself to the family*

---

*it must be a really bitter pill to swallow*

---



Sometimes this appeal to the audience works in a negative way, where the kind of emotional experience identified in the *ORIENTATION* is characterised as defying projection by the audience into the situation suffered by the actant. Thus:

---

*now unless you've been in that situation of gradually having the panic rise inside you you probably can't imagine how she felt*

*.....  
and noone can prepare for the shock that Marie had  
because when she went in she was sat down  
and she was told that she had a cancerous growth on her breast  
and she was told that she would have to have a mastectomy*

---

*I don't know what you do under those circumstances  
presumably you scream and shout and yell  
and that's certainly what Marianne did*

---

*now she's just twenty seven years old  
and so it's a double shock  
an(d) a double horror  
and that's what I meant by trying to say at the beginning of this that  
no fella can possibly understand what it feels like*

---

This kind of negative empathetic orientation is built upon a paradox. At the same moment as it denies the possibilities of projecting into the position of a narrative actant, it simultaneously operates as an injunction to do precisely that. It is not, therefore, a precise and literal denial or refusal of empathy; rather is it a way of marking an event or situation as extreme and as lying outside the normal order of experience. To appreciate fully the quality of the experience undergone by an actant in such a situation requires a special effort of empathy.

#### **2.3.4.2 ORIENTATION TO AUDIENCE**

If one kind of orientation seemingly recruits the audience to a position occupied by an actant, another kind of orientation projects outwards from the narrative to the position of the audience. Again it involves varieties of direct address.

---

*and one night  
you guessed it  
she took half a bottle of pills*



---

*now it's easy to look at the radio and say  
you're saying it's third time lucky  
and I am saying it's third time lucky*

---

*and believe it or not  
as you look at the radio  
and maybe you're a little bit cynical about it  
nothing happened*

---

*an(d) you're looking straight at the radio now and saying  
ah she met somebody  
no  
one evening at the end of May last year she was in the bath  
and she found a lump*

---

In all of these cases the Broadcast Narrator re-orientes the discourse away from the direct process of narration itself and re-aligns the discourse with the process of reception. It projects into the position, not of a narrative actant, but into the position of its hypothetical audience. Significantly, many cases of orienting the narration alongside the audience involve anticipating what the likely next event will be and either confirming the event-line or signalling a departure from it.

A different kind of audience orientation involves anticipating the likely evaluative framework that the audience may bring to bear upon narrative events, as in the following:

---

*because you have preconceptions about divorce  
and you have preconceptions also about the way it affects kids  
and sometimes you forget about how it affects the adults as well in a family*

---

*and ehyou can't make any . accusations . about whose fault it was because  
those things do happen in relationships*

---

*this one is the kind of letter that's going to get everybody ringing in  
the phones are going to ri light up like Christmas trees basically with ladies  
er ringing in to complain that I shouldn't do it  
an(d) I can probably understand how they feel about it*

---

### 2.3.5 EVALUATION: GENERIC MAXIMS

These provide a pseudo-explanatory framework within which the specific events or situations of the narrative can be understood by reference to

some proposed class of actions. It is difficult to specify precise realisational features for this component of the discourse of the narrative but they seem instantly recognisable in practice. I have referred to them as generic maxims because they tend to be built around classes of situation, action, or person ('people grow away..'; 'those things do happen..'; 'that's something that you need at those times'; etc). In the course of *Our Tune* they rarely extend over several clauses as is the case with *SITUATING* and with *ORIENTING*. Instead, they prototypically operate as a single 'free' clause. Nonetheless, they are significant as segments of assumed commonsense wisdom which intrude into the narrative particularly at moments where it might attract adverse judgement from the audience.

---

*and ehyou can't make any , accusations , about whose fault it was  
because those things do happen in relationships*

---

*over three years people grow away from each other  
when they don't see each other*

---

*she'd hadn't gotten on as well maybe as she should with her Mum  
but that's two ladies living together*

---

*nothing happened  
it is possible to have a boyfriend without having a physical relationship  
and that's what they had*

---

*they just provided shoulders  
and that's something that you need usually at those times*

---

*the kind of people who reckon they're experts about things can't understand  
something that is exclusively female  
I don't believe it to be honest  
any more than ladies can understand things that are exclusively male either*

---

Instances of *GENERIC MAXIMS* are not dissimilar from what Barthes (1975) singled out as realisations of 'the cultural code' in his analysis of Balzac's novella *Sarrasine*. For Barthes, the cultural code consists of references to taken-for-granted cultural knowledge drawn from common sense, popular science, lay psychology, literary history, etc. Thus, a lexia such as



*"Be still," she said, with that forceful and mocking air all women so easily assume when they want to be in the right.*

displays, for Barthes, the operation of a taken-for-granted assumption or stereotype about female psychology. And he notes how such 'didactic material' is

mobilized in the text .. often .. as a basis for reasoning or to lend its .. authority to emotions. (p.205)

He further notes that:

these codes by a swivel characteristic of bourgeois ideology, which turns culture into nature, appear to establish reality, "Life". "Life" then, in the classic text, becomes a nauseating mixture of common opinions, a smothering layer of received ideas. (p.206)

They are, however, particularly resistant to critique, as he rather gnomically observes (almost in a parody of the cultural code itself):

a critique of the references (the cultural codes) has never been tenable except through trickery...In fact, the cultural code occupies the same position as stupidity: how can stupidity be pinned down without declaring oneself intelligent? (p.206)

These observations seem not inappropriate to the *GENERIC MAXIMS* of Our Tune, which are, it must be noted, inherently unstable. Either they are tautological, and hence 'go without saying':

---

*nothing happened  
it is possible to have a boyfriend without having a physical relationship  
and that's what they had*

---

Or, they are easily susceptible to contradiction by some other piece of popular wisdom. A generic maxim, such as

---

*over three years people grow away from each other  
when they don't see each other*

---

would be easy to contradict by some other piece of common sense wisdom such as 'absence makes the heart grow fonder'.



The 'patronising' or 'condescending' tone that some listeners attribute to Our Tune may be traced, in part at least, to the operation of *GENERIC MAXIMS*. Certainly, they are difficult to take at their face value, and may best be understood either as a way of accounting for actions or events that are not precisely predictable within the terms of the narrative or as a way of countering a potentially negative evaluative framework within which the action might be judged. This latter type of function, for instance, may underlie the following instance:

---

*she'd hadn't gotten on as well maybe as she should with her Mum  
but that's two ladies living together*

---

The negative assessment implicit in '*she'd hadn't gotten on as well maybe as she should with her Mum*' (despite the modal expression, *maybe*) is here countered by the *GENERIC MAXIM* which follows it. Indeed, it seems reasonable to suppose that *GENERIC MAXIMS* reflect points at which the evaluative structure of first person epistolary narration comes into conflict with the requirements of third person broadcast narration. Basically, self-assessment carries different evaluative overtones than other-assessment. (See below pp.283-5.)

### 2.3.6 CODAS

The narrative discourse of Our Tune is typically rounded off in some way either before the playing of the record itself, or immediately after it. The culmination of the complicating actions in a final resolution is not sufficient in itself to bring this about, and there is frequently some attempt to bring the narrative up-to-date. In this respect, they correspond closely to Labov's definition in which *CODAS* "have the property of bridging the gap between the moment of time at the end of

the narrative proper and the present" (p.365). A prototypical example of a CODA from *Our Tune* is the following:

*and from then on  
and this is why it's an ideal our tune in many ways  
everything's got better  
all of them  
the family  
agree that noone could have better parents  
Joan isn't a step mum  
she's Mum  
simple as that  
er the sister and one of the brothers has got married  
the sister is now expecting the first child  
and although the family's been hurt  
by sticking together they've won out  
and that's mainly because of a lady by the name of Joan...*

One of the markers of the CODA is the switch from simple past into forms of the present tense ('she's Mum') and the past perfect ('one of the brothers has got married').

Occasionally, the narrative can set up a train of complicating actions that have no resolution at the moment of broadcasting. Significantly the narration not only registers this as a notable absence but then upgrades the CODA as a substitute for the completion of the event line, as in the following:

*now there's no end to this story  
because it's still going on  
she's now on chemotherapy  
she's also been on special treatment  
radium treatment  
which is pretty tough  
and the reason for telling you the story is that er  
when I first came across it last weekend I had a good look and thought  
well someone's going to complain and say  
a man shouldn't do this  
and so I actually rang Marie this morning and said  
how are you  
because all this took place six months ago  
and she was really cheerful on the phone  
an(d) she said  
erm I'm fine I'm fine  
an(d) I'm coping  
I said  
how fine are you  
an(d) she said  
to be honest I don't know*

*I'm still having the treatment  
I'm under doctors' orders and it's still pretty tough to come to terms with  
but she didn't sound downhearted at all  
she sounded extremely bright*

### 2.3.7 THE RECORD

The completion of the narrative sets the scene for the record, which then comes to embody some aspect of the story. Indeed, it is presented as if selected by the EN in order to crystallise some moment of the memories or situation that the letter recounts. In some ways, therefore, Our Tune works like an extended dedication slot. But the detailed way in which the narrative sets an experiential framework for the music to operate within tends to radically revalue it. Normally, the lyrics of popular music - if they are attended to at all - are available for appropriation by the listener, to some extent on the listener's own terms. In Our Tune, however, the lyrics are pre-appropriated, as it were, by the narrative context. When the first bars of *I can't live if living is without you* come through on Our Tune they are no longer simply available for appropriation by the listener in the position of the 'I' or the 'YOU' (see Durant, 1984, and Montgomery 1988). The deictic spaces of the lyric have been filled by (in this case) 'Dad' and 'Joan'. And if we identify with the words of the song at all it is in terms of the represented experience of protagonists in the story. If anything, therefore, the record functions in the total context of Our Tune as an amplification or intensification of the processes of *EMPATHETIC ORIENTATION* noted above. It thus provides a particularly striking example of a tendency noted by Barnard (1989) (following Coward, 1984, and Hobson, 1980), of the way in which Radio One roots musical meaning "in memory or evocative value" (p.146) rather than in musical appreciation on its own terms. We may also note, however, that the placement of the record within the total discursive context of Our Tune



actually reverses the normal priorities of DJ talk versus music on Radio One, inasmuch as the pattern is normally only an incidental support to the music. Here, instead, the music becomes an expressive support to the discourse.

### 2.3.8 CLOSING

The closing section spans from the Our Tune record until the next record and includes (i) a *REPRISE* summarising the final events and situation of the narrative (sometimes replaced by the *CODA*) (ii) a *MORAL* giving the final point of the story and (iii) the final *FRAME*

#### 2.3.8.1 *REPRISE*

A reprise only recapitulates events which have already been narrated. It does not re-open the narration although it may add some details to already-narrated events. In the following *REPRISE* events that have been narrated just prior to the *RECORD* are here repeated with some amplificatory detail:

---

*well that's the song  
it's the song that Mum liked the theme from Champions it's Elaine Page  
and Marianne who swallowed a few bitter pills in her life really had a kick in  
the teeth  
because two weeks before she had the second child the son 0 October the sixth  
Mum died  
and it was Mum who had been helping her to go to Mothercare  
and get everything ready  
and it was Mum who put the seal if you like on the relationship that Marianne's  
now got with her husband and that's pretty sad and pretty miserable  
the only good thing about it I guess is that as far as Mum is concerned she did  
see her daughter happy  
what she didn't get round to seeing is her daughter with a grandchild*

---

#### 2.3.8.2 *THE MORAL*

The *MORAL* is partly an expression of the point or 'message' of the story, but it but it is frequently expressed in the form of an injunction to those who may be going through similar experiences, as in the following:

*if there's a message  
and it's Marianne's it's don't give up on life  
it is too hard to come by  
and don't give up on yourself  
because if you look round you'll notice that there's somebody who will actually  
give you a boost  
all you have to do is recognise that they're waiting to help  
it was Marianne's Mum on this occasion*

---

Occasionally the *MORAL* may actually preface the *RECORD*, as in the following:

---

*don't give up  
what you have to do is what Marie did  
and I just act as a conduit on it  
just look inside yourself  
if you look to your family and to your friends they will rally round  
and they will look after you  
but the hardest part is to look deep inside yourself  
an(d) if you do  
if you really do  
then you'll find the strength to carry on*

---

A notable discursive twist in drawing the *MORAL* consists of displacing responsibility for it away from the Broadcast Narrator to the Epistolary Narrator. The *MORAL*, therefore is usually clearly attributed to the Epistolary Narrator in ways such as the following:

---

*but the one thing that's pretty apparent from that our tune  
from Maxine's story anyway  
is the way the family stuck together*

---

*if there's a message  
and it's Marianne's  
it's don't give up on life  
it is too hard to come by*

---

*an(d) I do want to say what Marie says in her letter  
just a just as a codicil to the whole thing  
some people have coped better than others through this*

---

*what you have to do is what Marie did  
and I just act as a conduit on it  
just look inside yourself*

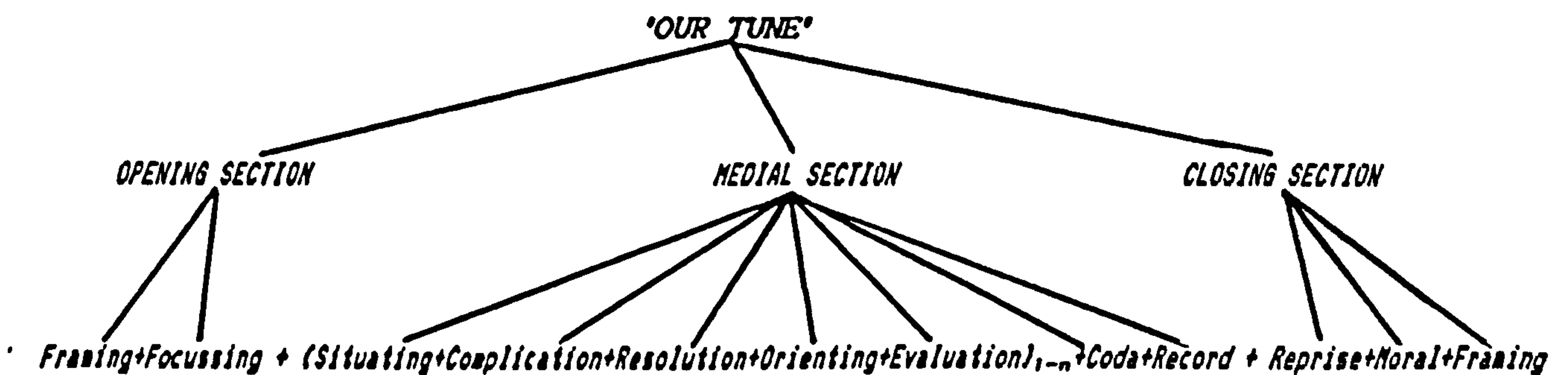
---

Nonetheless, even though the *MORAL* is ascribed to the Epistolary Narrator, its exact status remains ambiguous. This is fundamentally

because, whatever the particularities of experience represented in the narrative, this component of the discourse is invariably realised (as the examples demonstrate) in terms of a unitary, all-purpose *MORAL* of endurance and solidarity in adversity. Thus, it would seem that there are strong generic constraints on the kind of *MORAL* Our Tune as a discursive event is designed to support. Even if the epistolary materials themselves display the *MORAL* ascribed to them, this is the negotiated outcome of a process of selection in which, of course, the broadcast institution in the persons of the production team and the BROADCAST NARRATOR play a crucial role.

#### 2.4 SUMMARY DISCOURSE STRUCTURE OF OUR TUNE

Following work by Hasan (1980) on discourse analytic approaches to genre we may summarise the foregoing account of the discursive components of a prototypical Our Tune in the following way:



There are, of course, a number of difficulties with this mode of representing the basic structure which need to be noted. For one thing it is difficult to capture economically the way in which *ORIENTATIONS* and *EVALUATIONS* (in the form of *GENERIC MAXIMS*) may surface at any point in the *MEDIAL SECTION* And *CODAS*, as we have seen, may well migrate from the *MEDIAL SECTION* to the *FINAL SECTION* Furthermore, it cannot claim to be a completely exhaustive account of the structure of



Our Tune, since there do remain some residual elements that have resisted inclusion in this model.

This summary does, however, suggest the main structural outlines of the genre. This is not to claim that every instance of Our Tune corresponds rigidly to this format in all particulars (though many do). A particular Our Tune, for instance, may lack a satisfactory *RESOLUTION*. In such cases, however, it is significant that the discourse itself explicitly treats the lack of a *RESOLUTION* as a notable absence: it is discursively noted in formulations such as

---

*now there's no end to this story  
because it's still going on*

---

In this way the main outlines of the structure are confirmed even at moments of departure from it.

The model does also highlight the way in which developing the event line of the narrative in terms of *COMPLICATION* and *RESOLUTION* comprises only a relatively small proportion of the total discourse. The event-line itself may well be the constitutive feature of the genre, but its narration depends significantly upon a variety of other discursive mechanisms relating to the management of the discursive event as a bounded whole, and - perhaps even more crucially - relating to its reception by the audience.

At one level of course, Our Tune, is not in this respect significantly different from other forms of extended extempore monologue. Extempore lectures, for instance, (see Montgomery, 1977) display a like division between discourse that develops the topic and discourse that handles its reception, so that speakers of monologue in general can be seen to

operate reflexively in the production of this type of talk, shifting their stance to digress from, or gloss, what they have just been saying by way of clarification, qualification, comment, and so on. In this way they display an interactive dimension to the discourse even within and while holding to an extended turn. For the shifts from one strand of discourse to another (from main to subsidiary, as I called it) can best be understood in terms of speakers' adjustments designed to take account of hypothetical or actual audience reaction. As Goffman (1981) remarks:

It is as if the speaker here functioned as the broker of his own statements, a mediator between text and audience.  
(p. 177)

And in this respect, at least, the broadcast narration of *Our Tune* displays some similarity with other forms of extempore monologue.

Some distinctiveness, however, may be found in the precise form of the different components that manage the construction of the discursive event and its reception by the audience. Narrative, in any case, would be an untypical (though not inconceivable) generic mode for a lecture; and more particularly it would be unusual for lecture discourse to be littered with *EVALUATIONS* of the *GENERIC MAXIM* type. Most fundamentally, of course, the *BROADCAST NARRATOR* has a distinctive mediating role in this type of discourse. He mediates between a text supplied by a member of the audience and the audience as a whole. He may, in part, be a "broker of his own statements" (to use Goffman's phrase); but he also, and even more significantly, constructs himself as a broker of statements by the audience to itself - 'I just act as a conduit on it', as Bates says at one point. But in this role of honest broker, the practices of *SITUATING*, *ORIENTING*, *EVALUATING*, and *MORALISING* on the narrative all play a pervasive role. In the last



analysis we can see that the broadcast institution retains a very active mediating role at the very moment it effaces itself as the source of the material. It is to further details of this mediating role that we now turn.

### *3.0 NARRATION IN OUR TUNE AND THE GENERIC CONTRACT*

It has been clear throughout the foregoing section on discourse structure that the materials are doubly authored and hence have an ambiguous status. They are based upon readers' letters - some 500 a week according to a feature in the Sun newspaper cited by Barnard (1989). And the initial *FRAMING* and *FOCUSSING* of Our Tune openly acknowledge, and indeed stress, this fact. The source of the story materials, thus, is owned up to and ascribed to an EPISTOLARY NARRATOR whose existence is emphasised and presupposed in the presentation of Our Tune even though the name of the EPISTOLARY NARRATOR will be routinely changed (see 2.3.1 above). The letters are not, however, read out verbatim in the first person. Rather are they transformed in the moment of broadcasting into third person narration. (On the rare occasions when a segment of a letter is actually read out this will be explicitly marked as direct quotation.) Accordingly, it is necessary to distinguish between EPISTOLARY NARRATOR (first person protagonist of the putative letter) and BROADCAST NARRATOR (the 'mediator', 'broker' or 'conduit' of the EPISTOLARY NARRATOR's tale). This sense of a double narration is arguably an important component of what might be called the 'generic contract' that underpins Our Tune. The notion of generic contract is useful inasmuch as it embraces more than merely the recurrence of certain kinds of formal feature and discursive mechanism in regular kinds of combination. It is broad enough to include also background assumptions about what kind of discursive event is at stake.



In the case of Our Tune these very general background assumptions may be stated (in a form akin to felicity conditions on speech acts) as follows.

It is assumed for any Our Tune that:

- a. there exists a letter from a nameable source (the EPISTOLARY NARRATOR) (cp. 'this letter..comes from the South of England..from a lady called Marianne'); and that
- b. the events depicted in such a letter actually happened to the EPISTOLARY NARRATOR (cp. 'now this lady is an honest person'); and that
- c. the BROADCAST NARRATOR sincerely believes that the depicted events actually happened to the EPISTOLARY NARRATOR (cp. 'so I actually rang Marie this morning'); and that
- d. the BROADCAST NARRATOR will have rendered the essential events of the letter in a truthful fashion.

As noted above (see 2.3.1), aspects of the *OPENING* and *CLOSING* sections of Our Tune are designed to secure these conditions. Basically, an important warrant for the BROADCAST NARRATION of a letter in the form of Our Tune is the belief that the events depicted therein did actually happen to the EPISTOLARY NARRATOR in the way described. On the face of it these may seem rather obvious preconditions. Their importance, however, is thrown into sharp relief by anticipating the likely consequences were it to be revealed that a team of professional writers in Broadcasting House were fabricating the materials for Our Tune, so that they had no basis in fact in the ordinary lives of listeners to Radio One. The whole status of Our Tune as a discursive event would be irrevocably undermined. In this way it can be seen how specific are the generic conventions of Our Tune, as distinct - for example - from even closely related genres with which it shares important formal properties of narrative, such as 'the joke', 'the tall story' or 'the fable'. Even more significantly they highlight how underlying assumptions about the discursive nature of the event are as significant in generic terms as

more immanent textual criteria such as the presence or absence of certain kinds of discursive component.

Such generic conventions imply that when the BROADCAST NARRATOR enunciates events in the following way:

---

*and at the age of eighteen she left home  
almost immediately she started spending money  
she bought herself a car...*

---

there is presupposed a set of statements from the EPISTOLARY NARRATOR something like:

---

*and at the age of eighteen I left home  
almost immediately I started spending money  
I bought herself a car...*

---

Some of the peculiarities of tone detectable in Our Tune derive from the clash between these two modes of narration. Our Tune charts a personal world of family crises, serious illnesses, break-ups, break-downs, and bereavements. As such they imply an epistolary mode that is confessional - a laying bare of intimate secrets. And, for this very reason of course, transforming them into public discourse routinely requires a change of name. But the further change of the structure of narrative transmission from first to third person radically alters the evaluative economy of these tales. This stems from a basic, if elusive, phenomenon relating to what can be termed (following Pomerantz, 1975) "assessments"; namely, that 'other-assessments' carry a qualitatively different force than 'self-assessments', even when similar attributions are at stake. Thus, a pair of comparable assessments such as the following do not carry the same weight:

*a, I was out all night with friends; it was stupid of me*  
*b, She was out all night with friends; it was stupid of her*

In this pair the 'other-assessment' (b) seems stronger in force than the 'self-assessment' (a). Similarly, an other-assessment such as

*a, She didn't get on as well as she should have done with her mother*  
is stronger in force than a self-assessment such as

*b, I didn't get on as well as I should have done with my mother.*

This differential weighting of self-assessment versus other-assessment produces a potential clash between the evaluation structure of EPISTOLARY NARRATION and BROADCAST NARRATION. Certainly, any simple transformation of self-assessments from the confessional EPISTOLARY NARRATION to other-assessments in third person BROADCAST NARRATION would produce a discourse strong in adverse other-assessment. For this reason, various ways of 'hedging' assessments become built into the BROADCAST NARRATION. A claim, for instance, that

*she hadn't gotten on as well as she should have done with her Mum*

is hedged by 'maybe' and enunciated as follows:

*she hadn't gotten on as well maybe as she should have done with her Mum*

Assessments, therefore, are often marked with hedges in BROADCAST NARRATION, as can be seen in the following:

---

*so I guess Marianne went a little haywire*

---

*and as a result of that she'd got a little bit maybe loose and a bit wild*

---

*and its fair to say that Marianne really didn't wanna know too much*

---

*now the marriage as much as anything was I guess two fingers to Mum*

---

*and I suppose initially . trying to sort her out  
and trying to check her out  
they gave her a helluva time*

---

It seems reasonable to suppose that the hedged assessments of



BROADCAST NARRATION register the tension between markedly different structures of evaluation. Indeed, there are occasions where the BROADCAST NARRATION does more than merely hedge the assessment but explicitly refers it to the EPISTOLARY NARRATOR, as may be seen in the following:

---

*by this time she was realising that she was a bad mother  
her phrase  
not mine  
to her daughter*

---

Here the tension between the two types of evaluation structure openly surfaces in the narration. The competing pressures of these conflicting structures of evaluation goes some way to explain the peculiarities of tone which some listeners find offensive.

#### 4.0 NARRATION AND INTERPOLATION

If hedged assessments reflect problems in the passage from EPISTOLARY NARRATION to BROADCAST NARRATION, other features reflect problems in the design of the narration for the broadcast audience. Principal among these is the phenomenon of *INTERPOLATION* (See Montgomery, 1986). This refers to the eruption into a clause of elements whose role within the clause is difficult to account for in purely syntactic terms. In traditional grammar these were known as *appositional* items, though Huddleston (1984), in attempting to integrate them more systematically into the structure of the clause, deals with them as *peripheral dependents* (see p.265). As his term suggests, however, whatever role they have within the clause tends to be marginal to its structure and dependent upon a constituent more fully integrated into clause's structure. Nor does it seem possible to define the dependency relationship of the appositional item to the clause constituent in

syntactic terms. The problem may be briefly illustrated on the following example from Our Tune:

---

*er the sister*  
*the elder sister*  
*became the person who looked after everybody*

---

There are three basic clause constituents:

Subject: ..... 'the sister'  
 Predicator: ..... 'became'  
 Complement: ..... 'the person who looked after everybody'

How, then should the residual element, 'the elder sister', be handled? Is it a second Subject or part of the original Subject? If 'the elder sister' were coordinated with 'the sister' along the lines of 'the sister and the elder brother', then the separate noun phrases could be seen as built together into a unitary structure. But this is manifestly not the case. And if the 'the elder sister' is treated as a Subject in its own right then we are faced with two separate Subjects, a claim which is undermined by the relationship of co-referentiality which obtains between the two noun phrases. Thus, grammatical accounts of apposition which seek to place it structurally within the clause run into severe difficulties. It is for this reason that I have adopted for them the term *INTERPOLATION* since they surface within the clause, not to serve a grammatical purpose, but to serve situational and discursive purposes. They seem best understood as ongoing adjustments to the utterance in the light of discursive and situational factors. The discursive dimensions to *INTERPOLATION* may be illustrated by consideration of the following quite typical examples from Our Tune:

---

*er the sister*  
*the elder sister*  
*became the person who looked after everybody*

---



---

*now the two of them*  
*Dad and Joan*  
*were living together*

---

*and the husband  
Dad  
said yes I will try this one out .*

---

*all of them  
the family  
agree that noone could have better parents*

---

*but she did the sensible thing and she rang the doctors  
doctors again  
NHS doctor  
a sensible doctor  
said listen*

---

As *INTERPOLATIONS* they display a systematic set of characteristics. They do not seem to function as corrections of the immediately prior phrase. It would thus be an oversimplification to treat them as false starts or self corrections. It is also noticeable that the interpolated expression does not introduce a new referent into the discourse. Instead, they are co-referential with the expression to which they stand in an appositional relation. There is, however, often some reformulation in the interpolated expression of the appositional expression, so that - while the referent of the two expressions may be identical - the wording of the two expressions is never the same. They provide, therefore, an alternative way of encoding an established discourse referent. In all of the cases above the interpolation has the effect of treating two noun phrases as equivalent expressions for some actant in the narrative. Indeed, designating actants in the narrative constitutes the discursive process which is most susceptible to interpolation. In some cases interpolation follows the use of pronominal reference, as for example:

---

*all of them  
the family  
agree that noone could have better parents*

---

*now the two of them  
Dad and Joan  
were living together*

---



This provides an important clue to the nature of *INTERPOLATION* as a discursive process. Anaphoric reference by means of a personal pronoun (in expressions such as *all of them* and *the two of them*) is essentially a tricky affair, since the hearer has to recover the referent from some place in the prior discourse, and, where several actants have been introduced into the narrative, it may not be immediately apparent which of them are being referred to. *INTERPOLATION*, thus, may be seen as a way of clarifying which actant is being designated by a particular expression, especially where pronominal reference is involved. *INTERPOLATION*, however, is not restricted to cases where actants are designated by pronominal expressions. It also includes cases such as the following:

---

*at this time Mum was  
that is grandma if you like  
was gradually bringing the daughter back into the family*

---

*and looking back on it  
Mum was the person  
that is grandma  
the older lady  
was the person who was doing all the work*

---

*and the husband  
Dad  
said yes I will try this one out ,*

---

*er the sister  
the elder sister  
became the person who looked after everybody*

---

Thus, *INTERPOLATION* may also be seen to figure prominently in cases where actants are designated by the use of a familial term (Mum, Dad, grandma, sister, husband, etc.). Familial membership terms, in fact, bear some resemblance to deictic items: their field of reference shifts according to their context of use. They are, essentially, relational terms.

#### 4.1 INTERPOLATION, FAMILIAL TERMS AND THE NAMING OF ACTANTS

Actants within a narrative can be named in an indefinite variety of ways, ranging from proper names (John Brown) through to ascriptions of occupation (the plumber) and national identity (a Frenchwoman). Our Tune is distinctive for the way in which it names actants primarily and routinely in terms of family position: most actants within Our Tune are designated by familial terms, (see section 5.2 below for further discussion.) except for the EPISTOLARY NARRATOR, who - as we have seen above - is given first name (Penny, Brian, Maxine, Marianne, Marie) early on in the narrative, usually in the opening *FRAME*. Otherwise, proper names are used only sparingly, rarely more than twice in any one narrative, probably because extensive use of proper names would generate difficulties for the audience in remembering who was who in narratives involving several actants. However, retrieving the precise referent of any specific familial term depends upon recognising who the term is being used in relation to; and this can give rise to problems in dealing with certain kinds of family situation. An expression such as 'the Mum' can become ambiguous when dealing with families of more than one generation; similarly, 'the husband' is potentially ambiguous in a case where the EPISTOLARY NARRATOR has reached her third marriage. *INTERPOLATION*, therefore, can in many cases be seen as prompted by the problems of using familial terms as referring expressions. In particular, when using such deictic-like terms for the purposes of definite reference (to refer to a unique individual), they presuppose ready access by the audience to the narrative situation even though this may be relatively complex and in flux over the course of the telling of the story. An example such as

---

*by this time really her daughter had become her mother's daughter  
if you understand what I mean*

---

reflects this difficulty. Family membership terms, therefore, become a not infrequent trigger for *INTERPOLATION*, reflecting the BROADCAST NARRATOR's moment by moment assessment of the state of common ground between himself and his audience, which has to be kept in good repair if this kind of definite reference is to succeed. And *INTERPOLATION* itself provides an important resource for accomplishing this repair work.

#### 4.2 OTHER KINDS OF INTERPOLATION

Not all instances of *INTERPOLATION* anticipate difficulties in interpreting who is designated by a particular family relationship expression. They can be used also to particularise the range of an expression, as is the case with 'special treatment' and 'our tune' in the following examples:

---

*she's also been on special treatment  
radium treatment  
which is pretty tough*

---

*but the one thing that's pretty apparent from that our tune  
from Maxine's story anyway  
is the way the family stuck together*

---

Moreover, they can be used as an economical way of introducing an evaluation into the discourse around the use of a specific term as in the following:

---

*but she did the sensible thing  
and she rang the doctors  
doctors again  
NHS doctor  
a sensible doctor  
said listen*

---

*INTERPOLATIONS* may also operate in terms of larger units than the phrase. Indeed, there are several instances of not just a phrase being interpolated but a whole clause - for example:



---

*it was very hard  
and this is where Marie turns out to be really made of solid gold  
it was very hard for family and friends because noone knew what to say*

---

A distinctive characteristic of such *INTERPOLATIONS* is that they involve what Sinclair (1966) has described as a change of discourse plane, or (as Goffman's more recent formulation has it) a change of footing, where the discourse turns back on itself to comment on or evaluate something as it is being said. They are particularly noticeable in the context of the *CODA* or the *MORAL* as may be seen in the following:

---

*and from then on  
and this is why it's an ideal our tune in many ways  
everything's got better*

---

---

*what you have to do is what Marie did  
and I just act as a conduit on it  
just look inside yourself*

---

---

*if there's a message  
and it's Marianne's  
it's don't give up on life  
it is too hard to come by*

---

In such cases they provide a resource for signalling the status of the discourse at any moment in its production. More specifically, in the context of the *MORAL* they are used explicitly to distance the *BROADCAST NARRATOR* from the moral itself, which is referred back to the *EPISTOLARY NARRATOR*. In this respect, the same work may be accomplished as easily by a phrasal *INTERPOLATION* as by a clausal *INTERPOLATION* e.g.:

---

*but the one thing that's pretty apparent from that our tune  
from Maxine's story anyway  
is the way the family stuck together*

---

Generally, however, extended *INTERPOLATION* involving a whole clause differs from phrasal *INTERPOLATION*, insofar as the latter tends to

project the interpolated phrase as broadly co-referential to some prior phrase, whereas the former projects not so much equivalence as a change in discursive position or 'footing'. Nonetheless, both types of *INTERPOLATION* may be traced to a similar discursive foundation. In all cases they represent ongoing adjustments to the discourse in the face of possible interpretive difficulties, or in the light of possible misidentification of the status of the discourse. As such, they should be seen as a crucial aspect of audience design, supplied in situ and extempore by the BROADCAST NARRATOR. Indeed, they form a significant thread in the weave of BROADCAST NARRATION, a repetitious signalling of the DJ's role as 'honest broker' of the story materials at the moment of presenting them to the public.

## *5.0 STORY MATERIALS*

Chatman (1978) (following Barthes, 1975; Culler 1975 and others) usefully distinguishes between two basic levels of analysis in the study of narrative: the story material itself, and its mode of discursive presentation. In this account 'events' and 'actants' are located at the level of *STORY*, whereas selections of first versus third person or spoken rather than written are located at the level of *DISCOURSE*. The discussion so far has thus been addressed to this latter level. But no account of Our Tune would be complete without some examination of at the level of *STORY* itself.

## *5.1 EVENTS*

In the discussion above (see pp256-9) it was proposed that *EVENTS* are realised at the level of discourse by clauses which are distinctive in terms of the tense adopted and in terms of the kind of process encoded by the verb. In particular, clauses dealing with temporally bounded

actions, in simple past tense, with verbs of action (met) and cognition (discovered) rather than relation (was, became, had), prove to be a reliable guide to the event line of the narrative. It was further proposed that the development of the event line could be understood primarily in terms of complication and resolution as its basic principle of structure. This, of course, is a general property of narrative - particularly narratives of personal experience. Part of the generic specificity of *Our Tune* lies in the types of events that cohere in this abstract structure.

The background theme music from Zeffereilli's film of *Romeo and Juliet* might suggest tales of star-crossed lovers. And there are indeed tales of relationships where the obstacles to marriage prove too difficult to overcome. But these form only a minority of the output. The major class of tales forming over half the current output of *Our Tune* are stories of life crises within the family, where the integrity of the family unit is threatened by events such as death, sickness, estrangement and divorce. In the context of *Our Tune* events such as a child falling ill with meningitis, a father dying of a heart attack, a mother dying of cancer, a brother fatally injured in a climbing accident, a husband's affair, are all almost routine complications to the narrative. The basic structure of the tales may be illustrated by three examples:

*TALE 1: Marianne's story*  
*(a happy family initially)*

---

*COMPLICATION 1*

- 1, and then things started to go wrong*
- 2, and almost inevitably her parents split up*
- 3, one day Mum just got up and walked out*

---

*RESOLUTION 1*

- 4, after a while .. (Dad).. met someone else*
- 5, and brought the lady home for them to meet*
- 6, and after a while they settled down*

---

*COMPLICATION 2*



7, and then out of the bushes and out of the blue .. Mum reappeared back on the scene

---

*RESOLUTION 2*

8, and so she (Joan/the lady) left  
9, so Mum came back

---

*COMPLICATION 3*

10, and to be honest it didn't work out  
11, divorce proceedings started

---

*RESOLUTION 3*

12, and .. (Joan/the lady) .. reappeared  
13, and picked up the pieces  
14, and so .. they (Dad + Joan) got married

---

(and although the family's been hurt  
by sticking together  
they've won out)

---

As was noted above the story has a two part cyclical structure in which the situation outlined at the outset is returned to at the end.

As the narration informs us in the CODA:

---

everything's got better  
all of them  
the family  
agree that noone could have better parents  
Joan isn't a step mum  
she's Mum  
simple as that

---

The overall structure of this story may thus be summed up in the following way:

*THE INITIAL SITUATION ; THE FINAL SITUATION ;; THE COMPLICATION ; THE RESOLUTION*

*'A happy family' ; 'A happy family' ;; Mum leaves home ; Dad re-marries*

Although the equilibrium of the family is threatened - in this case by divorce - the trajectory of the narrative works to restore that basic equilibrium at the end.

*TALE 2; Maxine's story*

(Dad had died suddenly and tragically; Maxine hadn't gotten on as well maybe as she should have done with her Mum; her father had left her some money)

---

*COMPLICATION 1*

1, at the age of eighteen she left home  
2, almost immediately she started spending money  
3, she bought herself a car  
4, eventually she bought a home

---

RESOLUTION 1

5. she got married to a guy called Tom

---

COMPLICATION 2

6. almost immediately she got pregnant

---

RESOLUTION 2

7. well the pregnancy resulted at the age of twenty in a daughter

---

COMPLICATION 3

8. almost as soon as the daughter arrived the marriage started splitting up

---

RESOLUTION 3

9. Mum stepped in and started looking after the daughter

---

COMPLICATION 4

10. Marianne went back on the juice a bit  
11. and met another fella  
12. fell in love

---

RESOLUTION 4

13. almost as soon as they (met she) got married again

---

COMPLICATION 5

14. well two years later the marriage started .. to crack up  
15. and one night .. she took half a bottle of pills  
16. and she nearly succeeded in killing herself

---

RESOLUTION 5

17. she was found

---

COMPLICATION 6

18. she found her husband in bed with another woman  
19. she discovered that the woman .. was the mother of one of his children

---

RESOLUTION 6

20. she came through it with a lot of medical help  
21. and with the help of the doctors came off the tablets

---

COMPLICATION 7

22. then out of nowhere came the bloke  
23. then out of the blue something clicked

---

RESOLUTION 7

24. the two of them married after living together for a year

---

COMPLICATION 8

25. and then decided that what would make their life complete was a baby

---

RESOLUTION 8

26. it was Mum that Marianne went to and told about it (when she became pregnant)  
27. she gave birth to a son

---

(just two weeks after her Mum died because Mum didn't make it to the end to see her daughter happy)

Again, the story has a cyclical structure, not only in its repetitive pattern of separation-marriage-divorce-remarriage, but also in the symmetry between the opening situation and its final situation, both of which figure the death of a parent. The overall structure of this story may thus be summed up in the following way:

THE INITIAL SITUATION ; THE FINAL SITUATION ;; THE COMPLICATION ; THE RESOLUTION

'A parent dies' ; 'A parent dies';;'A family unit divides';'A family unit reconstituted'

From this it may be seen that the trajectory of the narratives is static rather than dynamic. Although they lead to narrative closure it is one in which the disequilibrium of the complicating actions leads finally to a situation not very different from that at the outset so that the integrity of the family is finally maintained. In this respect, it is significant that many of the actions constituting the event line are presented more in the nature of 'happenings' - as if they were events that supervened upon the life of the central actant, rather than courses of action deliberately undertaken.

---

*things started to go wrong*

---

*and then out of the bushes and out of the blue .. Mum reappeared back on the scene*

---

*divorce proceedings started*

---

*she got married to a guy called Tom*

---

*almost immediately she got pregnant*

---

*well the pregnancy resulted at the age of twenty in a daughter*

---

*almost as soon as the daughter arrived the marriage started splitting up*

---

*well two years later the marriage started .. to crack up*

---

*then out of nowhere came the bloke*

---

They are not, therefore, narratives of change and development but narratives whose very event structure encodes a project of surviving, of 'coming through', difficult events. This, of course, is amply



reinforced by the overt *MORAL* supplied at the level of discourse towards the end of the narration in injunctions addressed to the audience such as 'don't give up on life', 'don't give up on yourself', 'just look inside yourself', 'look deep inside yourself and if you do - if you really do - then you'll find the strength to carry on', 'if you look for a silver lining hard enough you'll find it 'cos it's there'.

Not all narratives situate the protagonist within the family, as may be seen in the following case:

*TALE 3; MARIE'S STORY*

*(after splitting with her husband she lived with her parents for ten months and she finally managed to get a little house, for her son (aged three or four)*

*one evening at the end of May last year she was in the bath))*

---

*COMPLICATION*

- 1, and she found a lump*
- 2, she found a lump on her left breast*
- 3, now she didn't panic too much at first*
- 4, but she did the sensible thing and rang the doctors*
- 5, a sensible doctor said listen come straight in and lets's check you out I'm sure it's nothing*
- 6, when she went in he had a good look and said don't worry a lot of young women find lumps like that are harmless [...] we're going to [...] send you to an expert to a consultant*
- 7, so the next day she went to see a consultant*
- 8, he took her straight into hospital for a biopsy*
- 9, well three or four days after the biopsy she got the results*
- 10, and she was asked to go and see the consultant*
- 11, when she went in she was sat down*
- 12, and she was told that she had a cancerous growth on her breast*
- 13, and she was told that she would have to have a mastectomy*
- 14, well she was taken straight into hospital to have an operation*

---

*RESOLUTION; DEFERRED*

- 15, now there's no end to this story*

---

*(because it's still going on, she's now on chemotherapy [...] but it's very hard for marie [...] and it's even tougher when you haven't got a husband or a boyfriend beside you to help you cope and to make you feel that you are still a woman)*

In this case the narrative begins with central protagonist living alone with her child, located on the margins of the family as normatively constituted. She remains positioned in this way throughout the narrative. Although family and friends visit her in hospital

*they used to sit by the bed and twiddle their thumbs a little bit  
and they bring the things that you take to the hospital like the sweets and  
the grapes  
and they'd sit there  
and say  
well the weather's fine  
and Marie would know what they were trying to say  
and would know what they were trying to help her feel  
and it was only a thing she could understand  
not something she could respond to*

Her position of separateness remains emphasised throughout and is further foregrounded in the closing:

*but it's very hard for Marie  
because she hasn't got a fella to hold her hand at any stage  
she's got friends and relatives  
and it's even tougher when you haven't got a husband or a boyfriend beside you  
to help you cope and make you feel that you are still a woman  
it would be nice to think that Marie will find that person and find him quickly*

It concludes, therefore, with this basic situation unchanged, despite the trauma of the illness. Again the mainspring of the narrative is provided not by intended, purposeful action on the part of the protagonist but by events that happen to her. Indeed, the primary focus of the narrative is upon what it feels like to undergo such events - upon reaction rather than action. (Now she's just twenty seven years old and so it's a double shock and a double horror). This incidentally produces a most marked sense of discrepancy between the BNN and the putative ENN, since Bates classifies the medical condition under the rubric 'female', but thereby disqualifies himself as a male from being able to understand it, which leads him into complex **EMPATHETIC ORIENTATIONS** such as

---

*no fella can possibly understand what it feels like  
what the shock is*

---

*it's something that I can't comprehend at all  
no bloke could*

---

Even more significantly, however, it is a narrative of complication without closure ('now there's no end to this story') so that its structure looks something like the following:



INITIAL SITUATION ; FINAL SITUATION :: COMPLICATION ; RESOLUTION  
Marie alone : Marie alone :: illness diagnosed ; ? (uncertain remission)

The very lack of a cyclical recursion through complication and resolution in this case only serves to underline the static quality of the narrative in which the final situation remains little changed from the initial situation. At the same time it is important to note that, even though this tale deals with a protagonist located outside the family unit, it does so in such a way as to call attention to it as a marked case and as, in effect, an absence from the normative order.

Generally, therefore, these tales reproduce in their basic structure the family simultaneously as a unit under threat but also as a unit within which the leading protagonists of these tales have the best chance of not only of survival but also ultimate emotional fulfillment.

## 5.2 ACTANTS

Narrative in *Our Tune* is not concerned with developing character in terms of highly individualised traits. When traits are signalled, it is in a cursory and repetitive fashion so that the same trait surfaces across more than one tale (cp 'Marie turns out to be really made of solid gold' and 'Joan [...] turns out to be a solid gold lady one helluva woman in fact'). In any case characters are typically identified in terms of their family position and whatever individuality they possess tends to be assimilated that position ('Dad had been very protective'; 'Joan isn't a step mum - she's Mum'). *ACTANTS* in *Our Tune*, therefore, are more significant in terms of *ACTANTIAL ROLE* than in terms of specified individuality.



At the level of story, narrative theory customarily distinguishes between characters and the role which they occupy in the development of the event line. Underlying the wide variety of possible individual characters, narrative theory identifies a limited range of roles that they perform. Thus, Propp (1968) identifies for the Russian fairy tale a recurrent set of roles such as Hero, False Hero, Villain, Despatcher, and Donor, dependent upon action within the event line. In effect, such roles correspond to spheres of action and an individual character may perform more than one role. Similarly, one role or sphere of action may be realised by several characters within a given tale.

In the case of *Our Tune*, therefore, we may make a distinction between *ACTANTS* (Mum, the brother, a bloke, etc) that surface in a tale and the underlying *ACTANTIAL ROLES* that they perform. Despite the range of characters that surface in *Our Tune* there seems - as narrative theory would anyway suggest - only a limited range of roles into which they enter. These seem to reduce to three of particular importance.

### 5.2.1 THE BEARER

For any particular instance of *Our Tune* there is usually one character who occupies a prominent position within the event-line; and this character will figure more frequently in inherent roles in the narrative clauses. In nearly all cases this central protagonist proves to be the putative EN. (Maxine's story, cited above as tale 1, proves to be one of the few exceptions to the rule.) However, the sphere of action that they occupy cannot simply be described as that of a Hero/Heroine. As we noted above, they don't so much undertake actions as undergo them. Things happen to them or around them: 'she got married', 'she got

pregnant', 'divorce proceedings started', 'she had totally hook line and sinker fallen for him'.

### 5.2.2 *THE ABSENTER*

A recurrent fate of characters in *Our Tune* is that they become displaced from the family circle in some way. In the Russian fairy tale, as Propp remarks, 'an intensified form of absentation is represented by the death of parents' - and this forms a recurrent movement in *Our Tune*. Absentation also occurs, however, through divorce and separation ('Mum just got up and walked out').

### 5.2.3 *THE HELPER*

Most of the tales figure a character or characters who perform this role in a variety of ways, supporting the *THE BEARER* through the life crises which they undergo. This role may be realised in narratively incidental ways: the Samaritan phoned by the deserted wife; the sensible NHS doctor in Marie's tale; Chris - the 'true genuine caring guy' in Marianne's tale, who provided support while she 'was going through a fairly traumatic time'. Alternatively, the role may occupy more significant narrative space such as Joan in Maxine's tale who fills the position created by the absence of Mum 'and picked up the pieces [...] and did a great job never giving any thought for the freedom she'd lost by taking on the kids'.

In Marianne's tale Mum dies at the end but not before she has accomplished a crucial role both in looking after Marianne's child from her first marriage and in preparing for the arrival of the second child, the exemplary nature of whose behaviour is pointed up in series of parallel clauses:

*Mum was the person who was doing all the work [...]  
it was Mum who came round  
her Mum who produced the daughter [...]  
it was Mum that Marianne went to and told [...]  
and it was Mum who said terrific  
now you've got a family  
now have your daughter back  
[...]  
and it was Mum who had been helping her go to Mothercare [...]  
and it was Mum who put the seal if you like on the relationship*

The importance of the *HELPER* is often emphasised in the *MORAL*

---

*don't give up on yourself  
because if you look round you'll notice that there's somebody who will actually  
give you a boost  
all you have to do is recognise that they're waiting to help*

---

*if you look to your family and friends they will rally round  
and they will look after you*

---

In Marie's tale the lack of a fully-fledged and prominent helper gives rise to the following closing:

---

*but it's very hard for Marie  
because she hasn't got a fella to hold her hand at any stage  
[...]  
and it's even tougher when you haven't got a husband or a boyfriend beside you  
to help you cope and make you feel that you are still a woman  
it would be nice to think that Marie will find that person and find him quickly*

---

Not only the *MORAL* but also the *RECORD* helps to emphasise the role of the *HELPER*, since the lyric is often situated on an axis between the *BEARER* and the *HELPER*. In Marianne's story for instance, the deictic positions ('I' and 'YOU') of the *RECORD* *I can't live if living is without you* are clearly filled by the position of the narrative *BEARER* (Dad) and the narrative *HELPER* (Joan).

At the level of story, therefore, it can be seen how the genre of Our Tune replays materials from a simple narrative machine, the parameters of which are set almost exclusively in terms of the family.



## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

By referring from the outset to Our Tune as a 'genre', I did not wish to imply that it constitutes a completely distinct broadcast (or mass-mediated) form. It clearly has links with other genres such as the anecdote, 'true confessions', the record-request, the problem page, the parable, or even soap opera. Like all genres, therefore, it feeds upon and overlaps with other generic possibilities (see Bakhtin 19 ). Inasmuch as it does constitute a genre, it does so by virtue of its repeated and predictable recycling of a distinctive cluster of elements at several different levels. It is not that each of these elements in turn is genre-specific; rather, its generic quality lies in the particular configuration or disposition of elements recurring within it, elements that may indeed be found elsewhere but in altered and different dispositions. Our Tune, therefore, as a genre has a particular communicative economy and as such is productive of particular kinds of representation, these in turn being set into a particular kind of relationship with the putative audience (see Volosinov: 1973). When workers organise their morning break in order to listen to Our Tune (see Garner: 1988), they do so on the basis of clear expectations about what will be broadcast within the seven minute slot, expectations as precise as those brought by a habitual reader to a Mills & Boon romance. In the concluding sections, therefore, I will attempt to sum up the basic elements of the generic contract around Our Tune in order to suggest that as a genre it mobilises particular sets of meanings even if sometimes in a contradictory and uneven fashion. As a discourse genre, of course, it operates in a multilayered fashion (see Berry 1981) and I shall trace its distinctive mode of operation separately from one layer to the next, principally from the layer of 'story' to the layer of 'discourse'.

### 6.1 *STORY, GENRE, AND IDEOLOGY*

At the heart of the generic specificity of *Our Tune* is the simple narrative machine (see Eco: 1981) that daily reiterates recognisably similar stories. The stories generated by this simple narrative machine do not, as we have seen, plot the public world of work, bureaucratic intrigue, personal advancement or exotic adventure. On the contrary they trace the flip side of this sphere. The crises that central narrative figures undergo are resolved, if at all, within a domestic, familial sphere. The family, in this respect, is often both the ground and the solution to critical problems.

Indeed, the family is a major ideological focus of *Our Tune*. And whilst it often comes under threat, the threats which are posed to it are primarily of a contingent kind. As often as not they are of an accidental nature and the family finds its own way of coping during which the *BEARER* of the narrative exhibits, with help from others, qualities of honesty, fortitude and courage. Although the family may be destabilised by various life crises in the course of the *Our Tune* narrative, the narrative trajectory is one which reinstates the equilibrium of the family at the end, so that basically it reproduces in narrative terms the family as a normative order. In the light of current findings that, for instance, one in three new marriages is destined for divorce, that one in five children has divorced parents by the age of 16, and that one in four children is registered at birth to parents not legally married, *Our Tune* may be seen as performing narrative maintenance and repair work on a troubled institution. But, if the family is often the ground on which the narrative complications of *Our Tune* arise, it is not easy to see why it should also be simultaneously offered as the solution, particularly when the family in



its nuclear form only accounts for something like 25% of households. Part of the answer to this puzzle lies in available ways of 'figuring' the community in contemporary culture. 'The family' as a potent narrative figure seems to survive within our culture precisely because it is the most generally and perhaps the only available way of imagining the small community and so mediating between the individual and society. Indeed, as Thatcherism articulates it: "There is no such thing as society. There are only individuals and their families". (Or, as the current director of the ESRC - Howard Newby - argues: "the community has been privatised. The home is the haven in a heartless world and families retreat into the home, not the community.") Thatcher's comment is curious inasmuch as it does, in this context, manage to elide altogether the figure of 'the nation', which at other moments in the discourse of Thatcherism plays a crucial role (see, for example, arguments over defence and over European unification), so much so that it may clearly be seen to comprise the second term in the imagining of community: individuals come together in the micro-community of the family; and families come together in the larger community of the nation. (Both terms, of course, are potently condensed in the figure of 'The Royal Family'.) The nation, however, is most particularly potent as a figure for organising events in the public sphere. In the context of *Our Tune*, where each narrative trajectory is prompted by a personal and individual life-crisis, 'the nation' is too remote a community to provide a satisfactory resolution. Lacking any other potent figure of community these life-crises have nowhere else than the family to go to in their search for narrative resolution. It is thus that the narrative machine of *Our Tune* - at the level of story - is compelled to traverse the space between two opposing positions - between the family as the ground of problems and as their only



resolution. [\*1]

**6.2 DISCOURSE, GENRE & AUDIENCE: THE NEGOTIATION OF PRIVATE EXPERIENCE INTO THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**

If the story materials negotiate a basic contradiction, related contradictions also operate at the level of discourse or narration. Here, the discourse traverses the space between opposing tendencies: between a first person epistolary narrator who changes day by day and the stable broadcast narrator - Simon Bates; between a private confessional discourse and a public narrative discourse; between a kaleidroscope of existential dilemmas and a unitary consensual moral; between unique life-crises and the durability of everyday life.

The generic specificity of *Our Tune* lies not only in particular sets of story materials. It also resides in the very discursive conditions that underpin the way these events are narrated. Bates's narration, as we saw above in §3.0 (p. 282), proceeds as if:

- a. for any *Our Tune* there exists a letter from a nameable source (the EPISTOLARY NARRATOR) (cp. 'this letter..comes from the South of England..from a lady called Marianne'); and that
- b. the events depicted in such a letter actually happened to the EPISTOLARY NARRATOR (cp. 'now this lady is an honest person'); and that
- c. the BROADCAST NARRATOR sincerely believes that the depicted events actually happened to the EPISTOLARY NARRATOR (cp. 'so I actually rang Marie this morning'); and that
- d. the BROADCAST NARRATOR will have rendered the essential events of the letter in a truthful fashion.

These conditions constitute a crucial component of the generic contract that binds *Our Tune* to its habitual audience. They do, however, generate a peculiar frisson in the way the materials are narrated. For one thing, the story materials are often presented at discursive arms length. This may be seen in the act of FRAMING the narrative (as we saw in §2.3.1, above) where, although the materials are attributed to a

specific source (as in "this one comes from North of the border") as a way of authenticating it as a tale of 'real life', it is also presented with sufficient details of its source withheld to preserve anonymity. Thus, responsibility for the tale is left to reside ambiguously between the EN and the BN. At the same time, the subsequent FOCUS will commonly point up or foreground the risky dimensions of the material - as in, for example:

*this one is the kind of letter that's going to get everybody ringing in the phones are going to ri light up like Christmas trees basically with ladies er ringing in to complain that I shouldn't do it*

And sure enough the *CLOSING* begins:

*we've had a few phone calls saying that er it's not a subject we should talk about on the radio*

The materials, therefore, are often presented as if potentially scandalous or in some way risky and as if their passage into the publicly broadcast sphere has to be negotiated with delicacy. It is noticeable, for instance, that - however contentious the narrative particulars - the outcome or the moral tends to be consensual: "don't give up on life"; "don't give up on yourself"; "don't give up"; "just look inside yourself"; "your family and .. your friends .. will rally round". (see § 2.3.8.2)

In preparing for this *MORAL*, the discourse works to align the audience with the *BEARER* of the narrative by various kinds of *EMPATHETIC ORIENTATION*. These play an important role in the handling of the story materials in their broadcast mode. For one thing they draw the audience itself into the circle of solidarity and mutual support projected within the tale. But they also help to offset or preempt an adverse judgement at the expense of an actant.

*now unless you've been in that situation of gradually having the panic rise inside you you probably can't imagine how she felt*

---

*and ehyou can't make any . accusations . about whose fault it was because*



*those things do happen in relationships*

In some ways the presumed delicacy of the materials constitutes a puzzle, since they are not markedly different from those which surface in documentary form in *Woman's Hour*, or in fictional form in *Afternoon Theatre* or many TV soap operas (e.g. *Brookside* or *East Enders*). Their apparent volatility in *Our Tune* comes from a tension between different generic antecedents. Not only do we have a manifest clash between the private confessional letter and the public narrative (with competing structures of evaluation, as we saw in §3.0, pp. 281 - 285); but at the same time the developed story format and the iterative qualities of the narrative machine are redolent of genres which have an avowedly fictional basis, such as formula fiction and magazine stories. This produces a potent mix. Crossing the boundary from private to public in *Our Tune* is given an extra frisson by representing - in a generic form more often associated with fiction - the everyday crises of real lives. For a cardinal component of the generic contract which regulates *Our Tune*, is of course precisely that the material is true ('This story's a long one. It's also a bit like a Russian novel. You almost have to know the cast of characters.' But, says Bates, 'It is a true story'; or 'she's honest and that's the reason for using this *Our Tune*'). Indeed, it is this which provides the avowed warrant for broadcasting potentially delicate material - that it has a basis in the real life of an ordinary listener.

Scannell (1988) has argued convincingly that the history of broadcasting from radio through to TV can be read in terms of a search for a voice that replicates everyday conditions of communication - a



search that has led to the adoption of "natural forms of talk and performance in all areas of output" (p.18), so that "amongst the particular pleasures discovered by broadcasting is that of the ordinary talk of ordinary people." (p.19) In Scannell's terms, this has been accompanied by a growing celebration of everyday experience skilfully interwoven with the daily routine and carefully adapted to the domestic condition of listening. The most popular programmes "are precisely those that most fully express the endless continuum of day to day life and the interpenetration of the public culture of broadcasting with the private experience of individuals." (p.19). More crucially, "the creation of a public, communicable, pleasurable programme out of the stuff of ordinary life points up the ways in which broadcasting has revalued private experience as it has brought it into the public domain." (p.19) And it is certainly the case that Our Tune takes up the lives of ordinary listeners and mediates them back to the public at large. But the ordinariness of Our Tune is not straightforward. As Garner (1988) has remarked of those letters that are chosen: "for five minutes your private life is more important than that of Boy George." And the tales that are chosen (one letter out of a hundred or more) consistently chart breaches and disruptions to the everyday continuum of existence. Public space within the discourse of Our Tune is in fact only guaranteed to the ordinary listener by the extraordinariness of the experience which they can offer. And yet at the moment of returning this experience to the public at large it becomes assimilated to the recurring moral: "don't give up on life". As Coward (1984) points out: "you are special .. but your life and experiences are exactly the same as everyone else's." (p.149)

In this respect, the title 'Our Tune' is significant. As an expression, it's field of reference shifts between the narrated story and the requested record. When it refers to the record, the 1st person plural possessive pronoun (our) narrows in its reference to the actants of the story. The tune or record, therefore, becomes the emotional property of the epistolary narrator; and the personae of the performed song - formerly available to diverse interpretations by a listening public - become reinflected in highly particular ways. When, however, the title refers to the story itself (as in, 'but she's honest and that's the reason for using this Our Tune'), the field of reference of 'our' expands to encompass the audience as a whole. The story, the experience, comes from us - the audience - as one of 500 - 800 letters a week, and is relayed directly back to us (as Bates says: "I just act as a conduit on it.") in a subtle blend of institutional and audience voices - private discourses in a public space, public therapy on personal experience. In some respects, of course, this leads to an inevitable flattening out, as the messy contingencies of individual lives are re-articulated into consensual forms. In other respects, however, Our Tune is - as much as anything - about the audience's relation to itself: it affirms the existence of a listening public in a process where that public is itself a most crucial discursive resource. As therapy it works upon precisely that sense of the unspeakable that goes with the profound personal crisis - the sense of separation from the everyday lives of others. In this way, while it may be case that the story materials foreground the family as community, it is also possible to argue that in the moment of the presentation of these materials to the public another community is being invoked: not the family, or the neighbourhood, or the even the nation as such, but rather the radio audience itself.

FOOTNOTE:

- (1) It might be argued that soap opera on British TV provides a further way of imagining the community at a level intermediate between the family and the nation - primarily in terms of the locality or neighbourhood. And it is sufficient to note the titles themselves - Coronation Street, East Enders, Brookside, Neighbours, etc - to register the force of this argument. But, as many commentators have also noted (see, *passim*, Brunson: 1981 & 1984, Allen: 1985, Fiske: 1987), the narrative use of the neighbourhood leads to a characteristic narrative form which is decentred, diffuse, and open-ended, with cyclical transitions from household, to shop, to pub, etc. There are clearly problems about utilising this image of community for the discrete seven minute confessional narrative of the individual life crisis.



**PART FIVE**  
**CONCLUSIONS**

*CHAPTER NINE*

NOTES TOWARDS A THEORY OF DISCOURSE & INSTITUTIONS,  
POWER & IDEOLOGY

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This thesis has been concerned broadly with issues of language in the media and I would like to attempt in conclusion to organise these issues, by outlining a theory of discourse and society with particular reference to the media<sup>(1)</sup>. For the purposes of this chapter I take 'theory' to be the systematic organisation of knowledge and ways of understanding in a particular field of enquiry, so as to provide not only descriptive statements about the phenomena at hand but also explanatory accounts of its operation. Accordingly, a theory should be able to furnish precise, replicable, and detailed accounts of a phenomenon; but it should also provide explanations concerning why it is the way it is. Theories may be evaluated in various ways, including internal consistency, and conformity to criteria of explanatory and theoretical adequacy. But fundamentally they may also be assessed and compared in terms of the kinds of questions they are designed to answer.

Now there are, of course, a number of theories available for modelling and explaining phenomena in the general area of language and society, ranging from work within a Hallidayan perspective through to conversational analysis and the ethnography of speaking, and I shall draw freely and eclectically on the insights of such work in what follows. But, as we shall see, the questions posed within such traditions of work are rather different than those posed in this thesis. While all these traditions have interesting claims to advance about the relationship of language and society, none of them are particularly well adapted for thinking through ways in which - for instance - the discourses of the media play a role in the production and circulation of common sense.



Within ethnography of speaking, for instance, the questions posed are primarily descriptive involving issues such as what are the most productive descriptive categories to adopt so as to display the difference between one society and another in terms their salient speech events and fashions of speaking - fundamentally, who says what to whom, when, and how? Its main orientation, therefore, is towards characterising the communicative economies of different societies in a descriptive and comparative manner. Explanation in ethnography has an applied orientation - using its descriptive insights, for instance, to explain cross-cultural mismatches in communication. Both Gumperz (1982) and Bernstein (1971), for example, illustrate situations in which members of group A experience a communicative mismatch with members of group B because of some precisely delineated difference in fashion of speaking.

Within Hallidayan linguistics the focus is more specifically on linguistic features as such, which - as either system or text - are ultimately to be explained by reference to the social order. In Halliday (1978) this is articulated in terms either of the immediate context of situation or the larger context of culture. The explanatory direction is thus from observable or described linguistic phenomena to the broader society. Given a particular linguistic configuration as system or text, what are its originating social conditions? From the point of view of my own work this framework is troubled by a major difficulty in that it overlooks or underestimates the ways in which language is active, in defining and producing the contexts which are seen as determining it. And this difficulty operates at both levels of analysis - both at the micro level of the immediate social context and the macro level of the larger social order. Except for notable exceptions like Halliday's (1978)

work on 'anti-languages' it is not always easy to pose questions around the production and reproduction of the social order in language within this framework.

The third tradition of research - conversational analysis (see, e.g. Schenkein [ed] 1978; Atkinson & Heritage [ed] 1984) - does not offer itself as a theory of the relationship of language to society, nor does it claim to explain why social or linguistic arrangements take the form that they do. Instead it focusses upon the mechanisms implicated in the activity of conversation that secure its accomplishment as joint, fluent, and coordinated, practical activity<sup>(2)</sup>. Its focus, therefore, is on conversation as an instance of the situated social order - as a paradigm case of the social order in action - and how this works itself out in its concrete particulars. In this sense, conversation is treated as exemplary of the social order itself, which in its normative character serves as a constant backdrop to research but not as a focus of inquiry in itself. Although common sense would seem to be a concern of conversational analysis, it is common sense conceptualised in highly abstract - almost universal - terms rather than in socially specific ways. Ultimately, therefore, it is not concerned with the promotion and circulation of specific kinds of meanings, but more with the recurrent, routine coordination, and reciprocal interchange of actions.

All of these traditions of work, with their implied or explicit theories of language and society have produced findings that are of interest to the study of language and the media. None of them, however, is quite apt as an overarching framework for the issues addressed in this thesis. Admittedly, some of the issues posed in the chapters above are more narrowly linguistic-discursive in scope: issues such as -



why is the interpolation of phrases referring to family members so common in the discourse of the narratives of Our Tune?

what is the relation between tense selection and the construction of the event line in Our Tune?

how are assessments relevant to the tone of the narrative?

Inasmuch as they address issues such as the internal economy of communicative events, such questions might sit without too much difficulty within some of the perspectives outlined above. But the chapters above have also addressed such questions as -

what semiotic structures underly the production and organisation of material on the front page of a Sunday newspaper?

what opposing patterns of 'deep' grammatical selection organise the reportings of picketing in different daily newspapers?

what are the scripts that reflect a particular commonsense understanding of defence and which regulate and shape the direction of coverage during the election campaign?

what are some of the discursive practices which are particularly associated with 'talk' on daytime music radio and which are closely related to that talk's production of its audience?

how are personal crises discursively mediated through the figure of the family within one popular narrative genre of daytime radio?

These questions operate at a different level of abstraction than the first group; and they do not, I believe, sit easily within any of the research perspectives outlined above. Admittedly they are questions about language, but posed in terms of specific media in modern society. Indeed, the fundamental questions that give this latter series their full significance are questions such as:

What is the role of mediated discourse in reproducing the dominant social order?



and more particularly:

which linguistic or discursive processes in the media are particularly implicated in the practice of interpellation, thereby calling subjects into place within the social order?

In this last chapter, therefore, I would like to try and organise some of the specific concerns of this thesis with discourse and the media in terms of a broad theory of discourse and society. The major components of this theory are as follows: discursive domain; discursive genre; and discursive practice.

## *2.0 DISCURSIVE DOMAIN*

'Discursive domain' designates those spaces or arenas distinguished by their heavy dependence on discursive practices of one kind or another. "Space", here, can be interpreted in two ways. It can be interpreted fairly literally, so that discursive domains include arenas such as the law-courts, Parliament, the classroom, the hospital, or the doctor's surgery, and so on, all of which have clear spatial and environmental characteristics, and which depend upon talk for their operation. Even here, however, the notion of space is to be interpreted as more than a setting which 'contains' talk/discourse which may or may not refer to it. The organisation of space in such settings is what is of importance; basically a crucial feature of such spaces is that they are semiotically charged arenas containing recognisably similar elements doing similar kinds of symbolic and proxemic work from one occasion to another. (The altar in church; the judge's robes in the law court; the organisation of desks in the classroom, or seats in the lecture theatre; the mace in the house of commons; etc). Domains of this type depend upon and are characterised by conditions of co-presence.

But the notion of domain also may be applied less literally to designate institutionally demarcated arenas of discourse that are not so tied to particular spatial settings and conditions of co-presence - domains such as 'literature', 'radio' and 'advertising' and 'print journalism', where the discourse operates in a mediated fashion, enabling it to float free of the spatial and physical setting in which it is produced and enabling it to be consumed in variable ways, despite attempts to secure stable and reliable modes of consumption. Such domains then are distinguished by the way in which discourse enters into them in a mediated way, so that the moment of consumption is temporally or spatially removed from the point of production.

In either case, however, what marks a domain as a domain is its institutionalised character. There are regular and recurring elements of the space or arena, whether this be interpreted literally or metaphorically. And although the defining characteristic of a discursive domain is that it be constituted in discourse, the domain itself is informed by practices which may be partly discursive, partly extra-discursive. Discursive domains, therefore, take their institutionalised shape from a variety of supporting practices some of which are economic and technological in character. Discursive domains are thus kept in place by various institutional supports such as social relations of production and other social practices.

Accordingly, by using the notion of discursive domain, it is intended to recognise not only the institutionalised character of certain discourses but also that the source of its institutionalised character comes from extra-discursive domains - they are determined in the last instance by the economic. Thus, what defines 'radio' as a particular kind of



discursive domain is not purely the use of particular settings - viz. 'studios' - but also, in part, the nature of the technology imbricated in its aural/oral mode of production; and more generally its whole pattern of organisation as a public service or commercial broadcast medium.

In addition to more overtly institutionalised domains it is important to recognise domains that are organised in less formal ways that are still crucial to the reproduction of social life; and here we make a distinction between public and private domains. These may be distinguished to the degree that public domains may have codified prescriptions for conduct within the domain, whereas behaviour within private domains is less prescribed. Talk or discourse within public domains is also commonly for an overhearing multiple audience whose access to the talk is limited partly by numbers, partly by technological constraints and partly by overt prescriptions. And finally discourse within the public domain is inspectable and accountable in ways which discourses within the private domain is not. Thus speakers within the public domain are routinely held accountable for their utterances, which are often required to meet ad hoc requirements of logical consistency, veracity, propriety, etc. which do not hold to the same extent in private domains.<sup>3</sup>

It is quite possible that notions of hierarchy and nesting may be necessary for a full understanding of discursive domains, inasmuch as higher order domains may dominate or be kept in place by the operation of several lower order domains. The discursive domain of the law court, for example, is supported by a variety of other domains associated with legal training, the interviewing of witnesses, lawyers consultations with clients, and so on. Just so with the domain of parliamentary



proceedings - with the added complication in the latter case that the events in this public but co-present domain can, and do, become the material of the mediated domains of press and broadcasting. The broad matrix of possibilities for domains may be represented as follows.

	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
CO-PRESENT		
MEDIATED		

### 3.0 DISCOURSE GENRES

A discourse genre is an ensemble or distinctive configuration of particular discursive practices, which have achieved this specific disposition as an expression or articulation of the domain in which it operates. Accordingly, each discursive domain has characteristic discourse genres associated with it. A discourse genre may be simply defined as a more or less standardised communicative event with structural constraints on allowable contributions or elements, in terms of their positioning, form and intent. Institutions (and social formations, more generally) provide designatory labels for genres ('interview', 'cross-examination', 'lecture', 'sermon', 'sounding', etc.) some of which will not of course be restricted to a single domain. Thus, a particular genre of discourse may arise in, or circulate across and between, more than one domain. In this case, however, there is likely to be structural similarities between domains inhabited by, or realised by, related genres. Discourse genres which are common to several discursive domains will have names with fairly wide currency throughout the social formation as a whole, but such widely dispersed genres are likely to exhibit relatively flexible formats. The notion of

'interview' is a case in point: the doctor-patient interview, the broadcast interview, the ethnographic interview, the job interview, all have claims to the generic name 'interview', but will all exhibit differences one from the other. In such cases the differences may be captured under the notion of sub-genre.

Genres are prone to discursive innovation, partly by internal adjustments and partly by importation into one genre of elements from another. Indeed, some genres with high saliency in the overall social formation seem more productive of generic sub-types than others. This, I suspect, depends to some extent upon the degree of specialisation in the domain upon which they arise (and which they both express and enact). The sermon or homily, for instance, is now fairly restricted to the domain of religious ceremony and has few close resemblances with genres in other domains (though note 'Thought for the day' and even 'This weeks good cause/appeal'). In this respect, it is possible to distinguish between relatively open and relatively closed genres, where the latter tend to be less flexible and more domain-specific than the former.

It is also possible to distinguish between monologic as opposed to dialogic genres. Some genres depend upon the exchange of speaking turns; others (such as anecdote or the political speech) suspend the turn taking machinery for their duration. In the latter case, as Goffman (1981) points out the discourse may be single-authored, or it may be the product of more than one source so that the resultant discourse may be partly the speaker's own material and partly 'animated' from elsewhere (e.g. from an autocue). The main possibilities may be mapped in the following diagram:

	DIALOGIC	MONOLOGIC
OPEN		
CLOSED		

Disk-jockey discourse for instance is primarily a monologic discourse, but it would seem to oscillate between degrees of openness and closedness, inasmuch as parts of it are improvised in an extempore fashion and parts of it seem to rely upon pre-scripted materials (e.g. announcements, 'Horriblescopes', etc.). The distinctions are also of historical interest inasmuch as the development of public service broadcasting in Britain can be charted in terms of a shift towards more participatory and dialogic and open genres, so that even in the context of disc-jockey discourse one notes the emergence of embedded genres such as the quiz and the phone-in. Genres it must be noted are not completely stable institutionalised arrangements of discursive practice. Part of their instability resides in the very procedures that genres develop for imbricating and cross-feeding material from one genre into another - a point that will be developed in more detail below.

#### **4.0 DISCURSIVE PRACTICE**

Discursive practices are the building blocks of genres. Discourse genres are constituted in and by the recurring deployment of utterances of particular types, these in some cases being chained in particular types



of sequence. Specific discourse genres and discursive domains exhibit particular dependencies on specific discursive practices, of which there are two basic types.

(1) The first major kind of discursive practice involves utterances as modes of action. The doctor-patient interview as a genre, for example, is likely to rely heavily on questions which are requests-for-information, answers to which are met with minimal accepts or acknowledgements. Classroom dialogue, on the other hand, is more likely to rest upon requests-for-display, answers to which are met with evaluations. Particular discourse genres, therefore, amount to quite specific configurations of particular discursive practices (in the current sense of 'types of utterance-as-action'.) At the same time, however, specific discursive practices can take on variable values according to the discourse genres in which they occur. In legal cross-examination, for instance, 'questions' are likely to be neither strictly 'requests-for-display' or 'requests-for-information', but may well be sequentially implicative of a later 'accusation' in ways unlikely to be found in doctor-patient interviews. Similarly, a question from the audience at the end of an academic paper is more likely to be heard as a 'challenge' than as a 'request-for-information'. A 'request for confirmation' in a TV chat show is most likely to be heard as a story prompt, which is not the way it would be interpreted in the context of a broadcast political interview. Thus, 'And you walked off the film set' by Wogan to a film star would generate a quite different type of answer to 'And you walked out of cabinet' by Day to a former minister.

The precise value of a discursive practice, therefore, may well vary according to the genre in which it occurs. This phenomenon has

typically been dealt with under the notion of situational constraints on speech acts. (See, e.g., Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Labov, 1972; Labov and Fanshel, 1977; and others for various situationally sensitive 'rules of interpretation'.) The position espoused here is that some at least of these phenomena could equally well be explored in terms generic constraints. Some discursive practices, of course, will in fact be highly genre-specific. The notion of 'complication' + 'resolution' as paired elements is unlikely to be found outside the discourse genre of anecdote or story. Thus, different kinds of configuration of discursive practice in terms of utterances as actions are constitutive of different genres, which in turn are expressive and constitutive of differing types of role relations among participants within the domains

Discourse, then, in terms of utterances-as-action is organised in  
recognisably predictable ways to constitute generic discourse types. And  
the principles of coherence that relate one utterance-type to another  
may well be genre specific. There are of course other types of  
discourse coherence which relate not so much to utterances as actions but to utterances as propositions. There is now an extensive research literature on intended but unstated propositions carried by the discursive practices of presupposition, implicature and other ways of providing a bridging proposition between one utterance and another via processes of inference. At this stage it is not certain that such inferencing is genre-specific, but it certainly seems to be the case that the inferences are organised into scripts or scenarios which achieve momentary prominence within one genre or another and circulate between and across them at particular historical junctures.



(2) The second major type of discursive practice consists of particular devices that are implicated in the transfer and embedding of material from one genre into another. Devices for reporting speech are obviously a case in point. But the situation even here is more complicated than the well known distinctions into direct, indirect and free indirect speech might indicate. (See Leech and Short, 1981; Toolan 1989). For example, in broadcast news-programmes, material from studio discussion, interview, speech, press conference, and vox pop or eyewitness account are all routinely embedded into the discourse of the news report but in a hierachical fashion so that more authority is attached to opinions uttered, for instance, in the press conference than the vox pop. (See Hartley, 1982; and Hartley & Montgomery, 1985). What is also crucial is that the way material is formulated in one domain with its associated genre clearly affects its capacity to circulate beyond this domain in other genres. The second major type of discursive practice, therefore, also includes what are more commonly designated 'rhetorical figures'. One such rhetorical figure is metaphor. In the political domain these seem particularly crucial ways of organising and structuring consent (and, less frequently, opposition) around key issues such as the economy or defence: hence the economy as a sick patient ('the ailing economy is suffering from a bout of inflation') or temperamental machine ('inflation is causing the economy to overheat'); or hence the Soviet Union as the Russian Bear ("The Russian bear was easier to deal with when it looked more like a bear than it does now" - which incidentally is something we are warned "to bear in mind"!).

The capacity of discursive expressions to circulate across from one domain to another is closely related to the operation of the latter types of discursive practice. For instance, the circulation of



expressions from the political speech to the news broadcast or the news report is often related to its formal organisation as a pair or a triple of elements which are parallel in their structure (See Atkinson, 1984 a, and Atkinson, 1984b) , or to its deployment of a rhetorical figure such as metaphor. (The quotation above concerning the Russian bear is from a speech by Thatcher reported in the Independent; the metaphor motivates one of only two direct quotations in a six column inch report.)

### 5.0 SUMMARY

The relation between discursive domain, discourse genre and discursive practice may be illustrated by a number of examples. For instance, 'cross-examination' is a discourse genre made up of a number of discursive practices such as 'challenge', 'accusation' etc., which operate in the discursive domain provided by 'the law'. Similarly, the novel is a particular discourse genre constituted by a number of discursive practices including 'narration', 'reported speech' etc., which have achieved this disposition as an expression of 'the literary' and thus operates in a domain organised by the activities of publishers, schools, exam boards, and so on. The celebrity interview is a discourse genre that may be found in a the closely related, overlapping, discursive domains of print journalism, radio and TV. It is characterised, especially in the broadcast domain, by replies taking the form of the autobiographical anecdote in response to discursive 'prompts' that address a prepared narrative of the celebrity's life. (Q. "You once turned up at a cocktail party so drunk/clad in...etc..?" A. "Where did you dig that one up? - No: what really happened was...etc...")

The notion of genre is extremely important to a theory of discourse and society for two basic reasons. Firstly, genres are differentially ranked as to their prestige and influence in society. The generic discourse type of the lecture or the committee meeting is more prestigious than gossip or 'signifying'. The football commentary is less prestigious as a discourse genre than studio discussion. The exercise of power is thus often closely associated with access to and competence in the higher prestige genres (see Martin, 1987) - almost exclusively those associated with the public domain. Secondly, however, genres are important to a theory of discourse and society inasmuch as latent in their operation are mechanisms for the transmission of expressions from one domain to another. Such mechanisms work negatively and positively. We have already seen that discursive practices such as metaphor and parallelism facilitate the passage of expressions from the genres of speech, discussion, and interview to those of news report. And presumably, also, letters from listeners to Our Tune become transformed into the broadcast narration on the basis of generic aptness - they must be easily assimilable to the genre of the broadcast slot. (Sunday Express).

But conversely, of course, some domains tightly regulate the passage of expressions from the genre in which they occur into other genres. Hence the concept of 'inadmissible as evidence' in court proceedings, but also the current ban on IRA spokespersons on British television, the concept of official secrecy, the confidentiality of patients' records, and so on. In all cases, of course, what is at stake is the passage of expressions from more private domains to more public domains. Genres, then, are important inasmuch as (to paraphrase Bakhtin 1986) they constitute the



drive belts for the transference (or the control on circulation) of expressions from one domain to another.

#### *6.0 PROBLEMS WITH THE CONCEPT OF GENRE*

'Genre', of course, as a concept is not without its problems. The most fundamental problem is that the boundaries that separate one genre from another are often not clear, so that members of generic category seem often to shade into another. At first sight this might appear to be a most serious difficulty. I would claim, however, that it is no more serious a difficulty than bedevils terms such as 'accent', or 'dialect', or even most crucially 'language'. When does the Lancashire accent become a Cumbrian accent; or when does Norwegian become Danish or Polish become Russian? It may well be the case that sociolinguistics can offer a useful model here for the study of genres. In sociolinguistics the separation of one dialect from another becomes charted in terms of the dispersal and distribution of linguistic variables and although different dialects (and even languages) are often separated only by a continuum of difference there are also cases where sharper breaks occur marked by isogloss bundles. If it is no embarrassment to linguistics that languages and dialects shade into each other, then it should not be problem that genres likewise shade into one another. Indeed, a productive way of studying generic difference would precisely be in terms of specific variables which might be called generic indicators (rather like sociolinguistic markers). One strong candidate as a generic indicator would be the presence or absence of direct address. Lyric poetry, DJ talk, magazine advertising, children's television, and nineteenth century journalistic accounts of the poor are - it was argued above - all strong in direct address.



These would seem to be superficially quite unrelated mediated genres. But detecting the presence of the same generic indicator suggests that they may have something in common that the superficial differences disguise. And, indeed, the similarities may be summed up under the basic rubric that when genres adopt modes of direct address in mediated domains they are genres of a persuasive kind that attempt to elicit high involvement from the reader or audience.

### *7.0 IDEOLOGY AND DISCURSIVE PRACTICE*

So far, the drift of what I have been arguing is that understanding the interrelation of discursive domain, genre, and discursive practice helps to illuminate the generation, circulation and exchange of material from one domain to another. But the issues thereby raised are more immediately relevant to the social-relational dimension of expressions and their discursive power, than to their representational or ideational properties.

It is not easy, in fact, to relate issues of ideology to the level of genre in any straightforward way. Admittedly, news reports - for instance - are as a discourse genre regulated at a very general level by professional ideologies of news values (see Galtung and Ruge, 1973). And more particularly we have seen how one particular set of news stories on the Sunday Express front page are assimilated, incorporated and adjusted to a basic homology - 'peace at home, violence abroad'. We have also noted how defence as an issue came to dominate different, but overlapping domains of press and TV in terms of particular ideologics and scripts during the second week of the election campaign. But the latter cases especially seem to be ad hoc instances of ideologies surfacing at particular historical junctures. And to identify them in

the terms given above is not the same as arguing that particular genres are in all cases constituted by particular detailed modes of representation. So that, whilst *Our Tune* may constantly represent the resolution of individual crises in terms of the family, it is certainly not the case that all news stories are about defence or that every front page of the *Sunday Express* is governed by the same homology. Note, for instance, that during the miners' strike different sectors of the press adopted quite specific and contradictory modes of representation of 'picketing' even though all are operating (at one level, at least) within the same genre of news report.

Accordingly, it seems more productive to locate the operation of ideology in discursive terms at the level of discursive practice than at the level of genre (while always recognising that some closed genres by tight control of the configuration of discursive practices can come to project a fairly unitary ideology; and also that particular forms of commonsense can appear to colonise particular genres at particular junctures.) This has the merit of making it more easier to notice of ways in which ideologies can operate in an uneven and contradictory fashion even within the same genre.

### *8.0 DISCURSIVE PRACTICE AND INTERPELLATION*

By linking discursive practice to interpellation it is possible in the light of the research presented above to see concrete subjects as interpellated by a variety of discursive practices (over and beyond, for instance, Pêcheux's emphasis on the relative clause, or Althusser's emphasis on 'hailing'). Indeed it is possible to argue that direct address, the intelligibility of glossing practices, even a characteristic configuration of classes of complications with classes of resolution,



all constitute discursive spaces within which interpellation may operate. But if this thesis has been fairly specific about what might loosely be called 'the contents' of particular interpellations - e.g. the bully script - it has, nonetheless, been vague about the degree to which concrete subjects are recruited to particular positions and thereby to particular versions of reality. Indeed, the chapter on the defence issue could be criticised for making little allowance for the position of a reader or audience that finds the glosses perfectly intelligible while totally disagreeing with them. Both Pecheux (1982) and Morley (1980), for instance, are careful to allow for a variety of non-conformist positions for concrete subjects and thus (like Althusser's original notion of the Bad Subject) for degrees of only partial interpellation.

Mills (1989) does include some criticism of a related kind concerning the discussions of direct address in chapters six and seven above. She argues on the one hand that the debt to Althusser (1971) is undermined by not developing strongly enough the implications of the positioning of the subject/reader; and at the same time she also argues that this work on direct address underestimates the range of positions in which an audience may be placed by discourse (despite, for example, pp. 222-224 & 236-238). These criticisms only help to confirm for me the problems that can arise in ascribing an overdetermining role to the discourse itself. And I am not convinced that this difficulty is avoided in the particular analysis of a poem conducted in *'Knowing your place'* (Mills, op.cit.). Here, admittedly, rather in the tradition of Morley and more specifically Pêcheux, four positions are proposed from which the poem may be read. But these seem to carve up the potential readership



of the poem in a somewhat reductive way. This may be seen more clearly if a segment of the poem is quoted with its accompanying commentary:

VALENTINE

The things about you I appreciate  
May seem indelicate:  
I'd like to find you in the shower  
And chase the soap for half an hour  
I'd like to have you in my power  
And see your eyes dilate  
I'd like to have your back to scour  
And other parts to lubricate.  
etc

The commentary then develops as follows:

There are four positions which can be adopted according to gender and affiliation. The male reader is offered a position which I would argue is the dominant reading of this poem; the reader's position is elided with that of the speaking 'I'..... The female reader has three positions: 1) to read the text as if addressed to her, the dominant reading for the text, which constitutes her within the dominant male view of femininity; 2) to affiliate as a male, that is to read it as if the text positions her as the speaker. This is a curious position because she can make sense of the poem as a male affiliated female, and yet there are several points at which she has to read as an overhearing reader. In both cases the female reader laughs at the jokes and is interpellated into a position where certain ideological knowledges about the nature of men and women have to be accepted as true. 3) A third position for the female reader is one of resistance, and is what I will term female affiliated. This is a position outside the dominant readings which are offered by the text.

Now I would not wish to deny that the poem is sexist, in the manner in which it represents a woman reductively as the object of male desire. But, nonetheless, the commentary seems to oversimplify the range of positions from which intelligibility can be supplied to the text. The distinctions that are proposed basically carve up the world of readers into two basic types - gendered male and female. And while an allowance is made for a distinction between male-affiliated and female-affiliated females, no allowance seems to be made for other kinds of gender identification such as gay or lesbian. I cannot speak for the

gay or lesbian reader, but doubt that they would situate themselves unproblematically along the axis between the I and the YOU of the poem constituted as it seems to be in terms of male heterosexual desire for the objectified female; which is not to say that they would find no position from which to read the poem. (Note, for instance, readings of Shakespeare's sonnets as homosexual love poems to a 'dark lady' who is really a male.)

Furthermore, it is not just that that the potential readership is conceptualised on simplified gender lines. No allowance is made for possible differences of class and ethnic position and so the commentary makes no reference to the effect of differences in class and educational background in its discussion of the female reader. And yet (even beyond the selection of a particular literary form with all the effects that follow from that for constructing readerships along class lines) it is a poem that is replete with references to elements of a particularly middle-class literary culture

..or make you cower  
By asking you to differentiate  
Nietzsche from Schopenhauer  
.....  
I'd even like you if you were the Bride  
of Frankenstein  
Or something ghoulish out of Mamoulian's  
*Jekyll and Hyde*  
I'd even like you as my Julian  
Of Norwich or Cathleen ni Houlihan  
How melodramatic  
If you were something muttering in attics  
Like Mrs Rochester or a student of Boolean  
Mathematics

Again, it would be presumptuous for me to speak on behalf of the working-class woman reader; but - to put the matter crudely and stereotypically - I doubt, in the face of the density of literary allusions, that a mother of four from Easterhouse would occupy the



same reading position as an Oxbridge-educated publisher's editor even if both were either male-affiliated or female-affiliated, because this poem interpellates strongly in terms of class as well as gender.

Thus, while it is important to recognise that complex questions of gender identity and affiliation are crucial to the constitution of particular readerships, such questions in no way exhaust the dimensions upon which readerships or audiences are formed. Moreover, I do not believe that extending the questions to include matters of class and ethnic identity and affiliation completes the picture. It may be the case that questions such as these point to fundamental determinants but in the concrete processes of reading by empirical readers a range of other dimensions come into play: social security claimant, shareholder, house owner, trade union member, lapsed Catholic, parent, consumer, vegetarian, and so on. Particular discursive practices interpellate by 'stating the obvious' to the degree to which they successfully hook into the background knowledges that simultaneously underly and are the product of such identities. In support of this I would cite three bits of anecdotal evidence.

(a) Penelope Leach's book *Baby and Child* (Leach, 1976) alternates the use of pronouns HE and SHE to refer to the behaviour of the generic child. Initially, when consulting the book after the birth of our first child I used to read past the paragraphs referring to 'she' simply because our first child was male. I do not wish to dispute the important claims about the sexist use of the generic HE (see Spender, 1980); merely to say that had our first child been female these same passages would have interpellated most strongly and that circumstances



such as being a male parent of a male child can condition the reading of certain texts.

(b) On the other hand the following passage from the Times is discussed by Fowler (forthcoming, 1990) as addressed to the housewife.

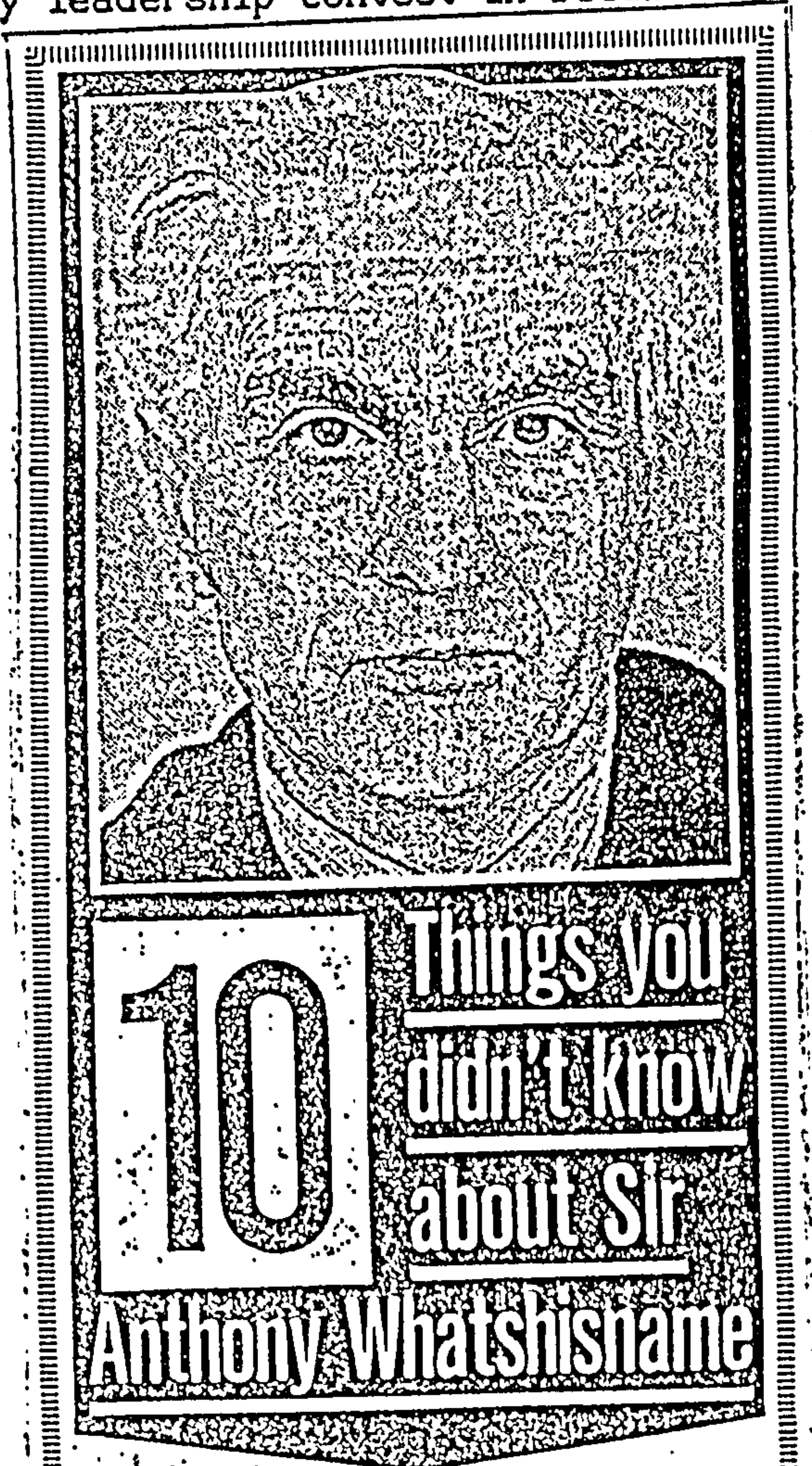
Left-overs do give plenty of scope for producing imaginary dishes. I always enjoy the chapter you find in many French cookery books on "*l'art d'accommoder les restes*", which deals with the subject quite frankly. Of course, you have to be careful with left-overs, as with any food preparation. Never just warm food through. Meat and fish must be thoroughly reheated to a high temperature. Not everything will be suitable for re-cooking. Shellfish spoils very quickly and should never be re-cooked. Food that you intend to serve again should be cooled quickly and refrigerated immediately. It is quite possible to follow sensible food hygiene guidelines and still enjoy being creative and thrifty at the same time.

Fowler persuasively argues that this passage (along with others in the press in the wake of concern - a kind of moral panic - over salmonella, listeria, and other forms of food poisoning) typifies a general tendency at the time to deflect blame from the government onto the housewife. For him the mode of direct address is to the female reader ("she is here treated to helping of 'sensible food hygiene guidelines'"). And yet, even when reading this passage in the context of his argument, with which in broad outline I was sympathetic, I found myself reflecting on the meals I had prepared earlier in the week which had precisely involved 'left-overs': had I thoroughly reheated to high temperature(?); no - I never reheat shellfish - don't like it in the first place; but I don't refrigerate immediately, after a recent conversation with a colleague who pointed out that placing a hot dish in the refrigerator raises the temperature of adjacent items; and so on. Thus, even if the passage is addressed to a female readership, I, as a male, nonetheless felt strongly interpellated - even to a degree of smugness about being 'creative and thrifty', while following 'sensible food hygiene



guidelines'. In this case, therefore, a particular kind of entrainment in the routine practices of everyday life ('food preparation') seems capable of overriding a gendered mode of address.

(c) The following passage from the Sun newspaper caught my eye in the run-up to the Tory leadership contest in December 1989.



SIR Anthony Meyer, 69, who plans to challenge Maggie Thatcher for the Tory leadership, is hardly a household name.

An MP on and off for 25 years, he has failed to win ANY Ministerial post. And did you know:

- 1 He was the only Tory MP who opposed the use of force to win back the Falkland Islands.
- 2 He slammed Mrs Thatcher for letting U.S. bombers take off from Britain to attack Libya in 1986.
- 3 He inherited his baronetcy from father and pots of cash when his mother died.
- 4 He defended plans to make it easier for Asian fiancées to get into Britain.
- 5 He wrote a book about his political idol and fellow "wet" Peter Walker, but no one will publish it.
- 6 His wife follows him everywhere. She spends hours in the Commons public gallery, keeping an eye on her husband.
- 7 Party bosses at his Clwyd North West seat in North Wales dumped him as candidate in 1983, but Sir

By SUN REPORTER

Anthony went to court to win back selection only weeks before the General Election.

- 8 A fanatical pro-Common Market supporter, he once told Mrs Thatcher it was the British who were "impossible" on the EEC, not the French.
- 9 He voted with Labour against cuts in dole pay in 1984.
- 10 He opposed the poll tax, cuts in housing benefit, overseas aid and moves to curb overspending by local councils. In 1984, he voted in favour of curbs on police methods of "entrapping" homosexuals.



I had no strong views on Sir Anthony Meyer as a person at the time, though hoped that he might cause some discomfort to the Government by polling better than expected in the contest. The effect of the article was paradoxically to enhance my respect for him, precisely because, for example, he "opposed the use of force to win back the Falkland islands", "voted .. against cuts in dole pay", "opposed the poll tax", etc. It is reasonable to suppose that the text is designed to interpellate a reader who would recognise these statements as enunciating propositions that would obviously count against Meyer (because it is built on parallel segments that are presented as equivalent to the notion that "he has failed to win ANY Ministerial post"). Clearly, then, it failed to interpellate me consistently and throughout in the intended fashion. But I would not wish to dignify my response by terming it that of the 'resisting reader', as if it were a deliberate act of opposition.

This case, along with the other anecdotal cases mentioned above, seems rather to be an instance of the kind of theoretical claim developed by Morley (1980):

the subject .. exists as the articulation of the multiplicity of particular subjectivities borne by an individual (as legal subject, familial subject, etc.), and it is the nature of this differential and contradictory positioning within the field of ideological discourse which provides the theoretical basis for the differential reading of texts: the existence of differential positions in respect to the position preferred by the text.

Or as Laclau (1977) puts it:

the ideological field contains several "interlocking and antagonistic" discourses .. any individual will be the "bearer and point of intersection" of a number of these discourses (Laclau, 1977, p.163; quoted in Morley, 1980)

Processes of interpellation are therefore highly complex. It is not just that texts mis-interpellate, or interpellate differentially and



contradictorily as they unfold. It also needs to be recognised that readers or 'subjects' are not interpellated as a direct function of the text at hand, in *tabla rasa* fashion, but also by virtue of the range of prior discourses to which they have been 'subjected'. And these may constitute them in contradictory ways

### *9.0 CONCLUSION*

Of course, the kind of personal, anecdotal evidence given above is hardly adequate in itself as an account of interpretation, or reading-as-interpellation. But it does, I think, reinforce the importance of developing techniques for exploring the relationship between discourse and audience. Morley's (1980) work is exemplary in this respect. But, although it provides important evidence on the differential range of readings that might develop around a single programme, it fails to provide detailed accounts of the relationship between the specific discourse of the programme and the discourse of the discussions upon which the characterisation of the readings is based. In conclusion, therefore, I would like to mention two particular ways in which the reception of particular discourses might be studied in more detail.

One possible method amounts to an extension of the kind of work pioneered by I.A. Richards (1929). An interesting elaboration of Richards' method is presented and discussed in Alderson and Short (1989). Richards' work is based upon written protocols produced by Cambridge undergraduates in response to poems provided by him, which they were asked to read and comment upon. Alderson and Short, however, use a short story and generate the protocols themselves, which are transcribed from taperecorded, spoken-aloud introspections produced concurrently with the act of reading. In fact, the protocols generated

in this fashion are not greatly different from the anecdotal, retrospective introspections produced above. Their protocols are less personal, more attendant to particular linguistic details, and their emphasis is more upon measures of agreement between readers. But there is no reason in principle why the procedure could not be adapted to explore the relationship between a particular discourse and alternative accounts of it that are expressive of different places within the social formation. (See also Pêcheux, 1978). The advantage of this method is that it is easier to relate to particular moments in the development of the discourse as it is experienced in the act of reading.

A second possible approach is to explore the kinds of commonsense reasoning modelled in terms of scripts in chapter four above by the use of open-ended questionnaire. Respondents would be tape-recorded in interview on what might be called 'script-completion' tasks in which, having been provided with a specific step in a script, they would be asked to predict the next step. The background assumptions could be tested by questions such as: 'can you name any countries that you think might attack Britain?'; or 'what should someone do when faced with a bully?'; or 'how might a potential adversary be deterred from aggression?'. The scripts themselves could be tested by questions such as 'what do you think would happen if Britain gave up all its nuclear weapons?'. Careful pilot studies would of course be required to develop this approach. For one thing, even small changes in the wording of the prompt could have profound consequences on the shape of responses. But this in itself would be an important finding, suggesting - perhaps - that specific scripts are triggered as much by particular lexical items (e.g. 'deter/deterrence' - see Thornborrow, 1989), as they are by full propositions. For another thing, respondents would most likely request



clarification of prompts even in the light of carefully phrased instructions for the task, and the range of possible supporting cues would need to be carefully delimited. Clearly a particular interest in interrogating scripts and background assumptions by means of questionnaires would be in tracking changes and transformations in dominant scripts. As I pointed out in chapter four scripts that were easily accessed by many people in 1987 are less likely to be accessed so directly and unproblematically after three years have passed in which the media have recorded great changes in the international order. Indeed, the scripts which I proposed then to take account of election coverage of the defence issue, now look faintly quaint. However, despite the way these particular contours of common sense have been ruffled by history, they still remain of significance, not least because they connect with other crucial components of common sense such as the way WE (THE NATION or THE FREE WORLD) are articulated in terms of THEM (THE SOVIET THREAT or COMMUNISM). Quite simply, if the negative term of an opposition is removed, what happens to the positive term? One strategy, of course, is to attempt to replace one obsolescent negative term with a new one. Current candidates for the role of THEM are ISLAM, or - another variant on the external threat - IMMIGRANTS: hence Tebbit's recent interventions on Hong Kong passports.

It would be important for both types of study to collect information on habitual reading, listening and viewing, as well as on social background in terms of affiliation and identity according to the parameters of class, gender and ethnicity. But a particular interest of the reading protocol study would be in what aspects of social identity are actually made explicit in the protocols. These, indeed, should help, via reference to personal circumstances and the routines of everyday



life, to cast light on the reproduction of the social order in the act of reading. As Willis (1978) comments:

It cannot be assumed that cultural forms are determined in some way as an automatic reflex of macro determinations such as class location, region, and educational background. Certainly these variables are important and cannot be overlooked, but *how* do they impinge on behaviour, speech and attitude? We need to understand how structures become sources of meaning and determinations on behaviour [including 'reading'] in the cultural milieu at its own level.

[Willis, 1978: 171]

In both cases, however, whether by generating protocols of reading, or by attempting to access scripts by interview questionnaire, the empirical material thereby produced should relate closely to specific discourses at specific historical junctures. In this way, research on particular characteristics of discourse helps to shape the kinds of questions that are posed and the kinds of evidence that is collected. I would hope that in some way the suggestions outlined above might comprise the beginnings of an answer to the challenge posed by Morley (1980):

The relation of an audience to the ideological operations of television [and other media] remains in principle an empirical question; the challenge is the attempt to develop appropriate methods of empirical investigation of that relation.

[Morley, 1980: 162]

In retrospect it might be argued that the prime concern of this thesis has been in the limits of the sayable. The prospect is for new attempts to delineate the socially conditioned limits of reading.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) The broad outlines of this chapter were already in place by February 1988, when sections of it circulated as a discussion document amongst the Strathclyde 'Linguistics and Politics' group. Fairclough (1989) did not become available early enough for me to make proper use of its radical approach to questions of language, power, and society.
- (2) Their findings may, however, be read in rather different terms than they offer them. Levinson for example uses their findings as the major component of his overall account of the pragmatic features of language from a linguistic perspective.
- (3) These requirements, it should be noted, are not the same as Grice's maxims of conversation, which are formulated relatively independently of genre or domain.

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