

Parker, I. (1992) *Discourse Dynamics: Critical Analysis for Social and Individual Psychology*. London: Routledge.

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### **Research and reading**

[pp. 122-143]

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Imagine the shock, for a reader reared on the carefully sanitised pabulum of the proposed new liturgy, of stumbling across the strong meat of the unreconstructed Word.

(Moore, 1989)

Research into discourse should be led by the issues and problems that are to be addressed and, where possible, by research participants (those called 'subjects' in traditional positivist psychology). Discourse analysis is not, or should not be, a 'method' to be wheeled on and applied to any and every topic. All of those inside and outside the existing Discourse Groups which focus on method are aware that they are taking the risk of making an analytic sensitivity to discourse become just another thoughtless empirical technique. These notes on references for discourse work cover (1) 'methods' in qualitative research and discourse, (2) empirical studies of discourse, (3) discourse-orientated critiques of other approaches in psychology, (4) other introductory texts and sources on the topics pursued by those using discourse analysis, (5) critical responses to discourse analysis, and (6) theoretical issues.

### **QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND DISCOURSE**

There are many types of text, and discourse analysis can be turned to different material, ranging from interviews to group discussions to newspaper articles to advertisements. The structure of a report on discourse could usefully follow a format in which there is: (i) an 'introduction', in which other work on the topic (from the traditional or discourse literature) is covered, in which the types of texts that will be studied are described, and in which questions (the nearest we get [123] to hypotheses) about the construction, functions and variability of meaning (*à la* Potter and Wetherell, 1987) are raised; (ii) a 'methodology' section, in which the specific texts to be analysed are described together with how you collected (or chose) them, and here you could also say why certain texts were *not* used, and in which some details about transcription conventions (in the case of interviews, media recordings or discussions) or group discussion (particularly in the case of the analysis of visual material) are given; (iii) an 'analysis' section in which the coding of the material organises excerpts from the texts under the different discourse headings, together with some elaboration of the way they interrelate to give rise to certain tacit assumptions about roles, 'political' effects and social positions; and (iv) a discussion section in which the analysis is related to other material, and in which there is some reflection on the issues raised by the method including, crucially in the case of material in which you participated (such as interviews), the position of the researcher. In the following four sections I will draw attention to some of the issues that could be addressed

under these report headings.

### **‘Introduction’**

The way that language plays a powerful role in reproducing and transforming power relations along many different dimensions (of class, culture, gender, sexuality, disability and age, etc.) is lucidly discussed by Andersen (1988). Most methods in psychology are simply unsuitable for exploring those issues. Because qualitative researchers are still in a minority in the discipline, empirical projects still have, each time, to rehearse the problems with positivist approaches, referring, for example, to Harré and Secord’s (1972) critique of old-paradigm laboratory-experimental social psychology, and drawing, perhaps, on Reason and Rowan’s (1981) extensive selection of alternative new-paradigm approaches and examples. (There is, for example, a good discussion of the way the grip of positivist methodology on research into psychotherapeutic provision in the National Health Service was tackled at thesis level by Pilgrim (1990).) This ground clearing will then need to lead on to an outline of the principles of discourse analysis (see the section on introductory texts and sources below). It might be useful to address stage one of Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) ‘ten stages in the analysis of discourse’ here. [124]

### **‘Methodology’**

If the material is to be obtained from interviews, a decision has to be made about the type of interviewing process to be adopted. Structured interviewing, in which there are pre-set categories, threatens, of course, to smother the very variability that discourse analysis celebrates. Semi-structured interviewing is preferable, and ethnographic interviewing, in which the interviewer is absorbed further into the ‘life-world’ of the interviewees such that the horizons of the research are framed as much by the ‘subjects’ as participants as by the researcher as expert, can be useful (Spradley, 1979). A potential problem with an ethnographic style here is that rather than taking on trust what interviewees say, discourse analysis attends to every word with a *suspicious* eye. In qualitative studies, the position of the researcher, and the way in which research knowledge is used, are foregrounded (Bell and Roberts, 1984). This does not mean, however, that issues of power are necessarily addressed. A radical study of discourse dynamics, on the other hand, would do this as a matter of course.

At some point with all recorded material decisions will have to be made about transcription conventions. The simplest are those given in the appendix of Potter and Wetherell (1987), though it is as well to be aware of alternative, more complex, varieties discussed in Brown and Yule (1983) and problems of levels of accuracy which arise when transcribing your own speech and that of someone else (Stubbs, 1983). The work on transcription conventions has been discussed most fully, not surprisingly, in the conversation analysis literature (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984). I have found the following transcription conventions sufficient:

1 when there are doubts about the accuracy of material, put it in round brackets (like this);

2 when material has been omitted from the transcript, signal it by putting a pair of empty

square

brackets, thus [ ];

3 when you need to clarify something, put the explanation in square brackets, like so [to help the reader];

4 when there are noises, words of assent, and so on, put this in slashes /hmm/, like this /yes/;

The following conventions are useful, though care should be taken that these, an artefact of transcription reflecting *interpretation* of the material on the part of the researcher, should not be seen as windows [125] through which we may divine the true intentions of the speaker(s):

5 indicate the absence of a gap between one speaker and another with = marks at the end of one

and the beginning of the next utterance;

6 indicate pauses in the speech with seconds in round brackets, e.g., (2) for two seconds, and a

full stop for small pauses less than a second, (.);

7 indicate an extended sound with colon marks, ye::s;

8 indicate emphases in speech by underlining those parts of the text;

9 indicate an intake of breath before a word by putting a full stop before it, .aah.

Although many versions of ‘discourse analysis’ outside psychology have got caught in the trap of trying to formalise the analysis (turning it eventually, in many cases, into a quantitative methodological technique), the discussions of problems with transcription in that literature are still useful (e.g., Stubbs, 1983).

It is possible to take visual texts and to elaborate the meanings in spoken or written language such that the discourses that inhabit them can be picked out. Here, the tradition of semiology is useful, and the interpretations offered by Barthes (1973) of various icons of French life can work as a guide. An accessible, and enjoyable, introduction to the types of interpretation that you may employ at this stage will be found in the essays by Williamson (1986). Images can be used to provoke discussion, and so to elicit material (e.g., White and Wetherell, 1988), but the actual discourse analysis of the images themselves (advertisements, etc.) would involve the researcher in the study of what Barthes (1973) called ‘myth’. Stages two to five of Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) ten stages could be considered under this heading.

### **‘Analysis’**

The identification of discourses can be aided by content analysis (Mostyn, 1985) (and there is now an ‘Ethnograph’ word-processing package which can select, collate and paste terms and phrases quickly), but it is important to discuss the way the terms which would be picked out by this method are *grouped*. What sense do the terms make as part of a way of speaking, as part of a particular vocabulary? Here, the technical exercise has to be complemented by some [126] attempt to ‘validate’ the operation of the categories. It

is worth taking the texts, and the discourses that have been identified, to people outside the study to see what sense the analysis makes to others. A problem with this, and it can be addressed only by considering the positions of co-researchers and other peer-participants in relation to the dominant culture and dependent subcultures, is that discourse analysis could end up merely describing and confirming common sense (Potter *et al*, 1990). We should remember that the variability of discourse rests on *conflicts* over meanings and uses of language. The dynamics of discourse inhere in the conflicts between stories and those other ways of speaking that resist, resist even though they may not speak in full voice. (In the description of groupings, systems of terms, you will have to be consistent in your choice of and uses of the term ‘discourses’ or ‘interpretative repertoires’.) It would be possible to take up some of the issues discussed in stages six to nine of Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) ten stages in this section. It will be useful here to look for ‘implicit’ themes suggested by the *absence* of certain terms (Billig *et al*, 1988), and for this work a degree of intuition *must* be deployed (Hollway, 1989).

### **‘Discussion’**

Issues which can be addressed in a discussion section will vary according to the material, but the following points (which I have supplemented here with some references which explore related questions) emerged from discussions among students carrying out undergraduate research projects in the Manchester Discourse Group: difficulties of transcription including ambiguities and different coding schemes (Stubbs, 1983); the implicit rules of inter-views, particularly those which are made salient by research ‘disasters’ (Brenner, 1978); the position of the interviewer, relating to the knowledge of the interviewer as it goes beyond, before or after, the interview (Oakley, 1981); confidentiality, including a reflection on how far it is possible to be explicit about sources of material; the issue of power, how this was displayed, mitigated or transformed (Bhavnani, 1990a, 1990b); motivation and interests of the researcher, including an attempt to tackle the question ‘why do you want to know?’ (Hollway, 1989); the value of the project, if it is a contribution to the growth of knowledge or the validation and publication of experience; subjective involvement, which includes [127] how the research made you feel and what strategies of distancing were used (Stanley and Wise, 1983); what the effects were of doing the research, which includes deliberate attempts to engage in ‘action research’ (Kelly, 1986); reflection on audiences for the research, including the institutional pressures which allow some things to be said by some, and others to be silenced (Burman, 1990b); and generally things going wrong being accounted for, treated as occasions for discussion (Reason and Rowan, 1981).

These areas are not special to discourse analysis. On the contrary, they have been important in qualitative research for years, and it is now necessary to ensure that they find their way into the development of the discourse literature.

### **EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

Perhaps the best way to get a feel for forms of discourse is to look at how analysts actually deal with texts. The following selection is categorised according to the four different strands of work which focus on repertoires, power and subjectivity, rhetoric and

reflexivity. This is an entirely artificial categorisation device, but one which is just less confusing than other ways of grouping the research.

## **Repertoires**

I use this heading to indicate the tradition of work inspired by *Discourse and Social Psychology* (Potter and Wetherell, 1987), a book which includes a number of examples of scientists', racist and riot discourse.

### *Scientists*

The work on scientists is represented in Potter and Mulkay (1985) where many of the examples are of biochemists' interpretative strategies, and this paper is additionally useful because it addresses the issues of constraints and possibilities for re-interpretation of accounts in interviews. There is also a paper by McKinlay and Potter (1987a) on the way notions of models are used. The Sociology of Scientific Knowledge is connected to a Foucauldian framework in Hicks and Potter's (forthcoming) study of citation analysis in the disciplining of science. [128]

### *Psychologists*

Much of the work on 'scientists' discourse actually focuses on psychologists' attempts to be scientific (to speak how they think scientists speak), and appears, for example, in Potter (1985) where he looks at notions of testability, falsification and so on in the informal talk around sessions at a BPS conference. There is a study of the way 'mechanist' and 'humanist' categories were employed in the discussion periods at an international conference of psychologists discussing theoretical issues in Potter (1988b). A recurrent theme in many of the papers on science 'repertoires' (discourses) by Potter and co-writers is the use of Kuhnian notions of paradigm shifts, and the way psychologists handle those ideas (a symptom of the way the new-paradigm debates continue to nag away at the positivists' image of themselves). Social psychologists came under scrutiny in Potter and Mulkay's (1982) study of the repertoires used in a semi-formal small group where European social psychologists discussed applied research.

### *Personal construct theory*

Potter (1987) explores the way a group of personal construct psychologists use 'empiricist' and 'contingent' repertoires to justify their research (and, intriguingly, uses the work of the (post-) structuralist Barthes to help the analysis along). The personal construct group, and further transcript analysis, is also the setting for Potter's (1988a) discussion of notions of reflexivity. (The pity in all this work is that the psychologists had their anonymity guaranteed.)

### *Racism*

Wetherell and Potter's (forthcoming) *Mapping the Language of Racism* will be a key

text, but there have been a number of papers by them on this theme. The issue *is* discussed, as part of an introduction to discourse, by Wetherell and Potter (1986, 1988). Specifically, the material is racism in New Zealand. Potter and Wetherell (1988a) look at the way attitudes of the Whites to the Maori people are constructed in such a way as to avoid blame or accusations of racism. The issue is inflected in further papers: on explanations of educational disadvantage and positive discrimination (Potter and Wetherell, 1989); in accounts of violence during the 1981 Springbok [129] rugby tour of New Zealand (Wetherell and Potter 1989); and, in a helpful political intervention, on talk about apartheid at a time when a boycott was being debated in the BPS (Potter and Wetherell, 1988b)

### *Riots*

The issue of race appears again in an analysis of the categories of 'race' and 'government cuts' in explanations of the 1980 Bristol 'riot' (Litton and Potter, 1985). These events are also analysed in papers which address issues of social identity (Potter and Reicher, 1987; Reicher and Potter, 1985), and the issue of 'community leaders' in the events is the topic in Potter and Halliday's (1990) paper.

### *Gender*

Wetherell (1986) introduces the notion of linguistic repertoires to help analyses of gender (and also draws on literary theory here). The links between discourses of gender and work are made by Wetherell *et al* (1987), in which equal opportunities is a focus, and by Marshall and Wetherell (1989) which focuses on careers. Marshall (1991) analyses the social construction of 'motherhood' in childcare and parenting manuals. She has also looked at the professional regulation of maternity in a study of accounts by midwives and health visitors (Marshall, forthcoming). A paper by White and Wetherell (1988) deals with accounts young women give of body image and weight.

### *Other*

Potter and Collie (1989) focus on the repertoires used to construct and justify or disparage notions of community care. Riach's (1989) project also discussed this topic through analysis of interviews with mental health workers. Moir's (1990) thesis research looked at the use of discourse in job selection and career guidance. Bola's (1989) project picked through the accounts given in the BPS *Bulletin* at the time of the Burt affair. There is also material on case conferences in Australia, which focuses on clinical psychologists (Soyland, 1988), which is being continued in Britain, and on educational psychology case conferences (Warren, 1988; Marks, 1990). [130]

### **Power and subjectivity**

The research under this heading follows in the wake of the tradition opened up by the journal *Ideology and Consciousness* (later *I & C*) in the late 1970s and *Changing the Subject* (Henriques *et al.*, 1984). It includes the work of those who have retained an overt

concern with power and political practice and with (Foucauldian) poststructuralist ideas. It is concerned with discourse dynamics. This is not to say that it should be counterposed to the other strands, but the focus is more on the nature and function of discourses at (simultaneously) a cultural and subjective level.

### *Sexuality*

One of the most compelling illustrations of the positioning of selves in discourse, and the way this is intermeshed with power, is in Valerie Walkerdine's (1981) study of the verbal abuse by small boys of a woman primary-school teacher. Walkerdine links the discourses at work with a wider discussion of philosophy of education and teacher-training ideologies. Walkerdine (1984) picks through images of gender in girls' comics, and this work is developed in a later book chapter (Walkerdine, 1987) to include a discussion of the dangers of the 'discourse determinism' that, she admits, could have been the message some in her (Walkerdine, 1981) account of teacher-pupil discourse. There is also a selection of Walkerdine's work in a recent edited book (Walkerdine, 1991). The link between what is spoken in example texts and the operation of discourse in relation to gender relations is made also by Wendy Hollway's (1982) thesis, and her material from this, on heterosexual couples, is to be found in her chapter in Henriques *et al.* (1984) and in Hollway (1989). Hollway's description of heterosexual couples' discourses is taken up and used by Pringle (1989: 1991) in a discussion of the relationships between secretaries and their bosses. There is a discussion of the implications for an understanding of male violence in Hollway (1981). Corinne Squire's (1989) survey of feminism in psychology is located in this discourse tradition, and Gavey (1989) provides an overview of these issues. Outside psychology altogether, the structure of the British Conservatives' discourse on the 'promotion of homosexuality' in local government is analysed well by Smith (1990). Recently, amid some dreadful research (Parker, 1989c), there have been some useful analyses of the way AIDS has been discursively constituted as a topic [131] (e.g., Seidel, 1990), and Haraway (1989) uses a feminist Foucauldian framework for a study of the image of the immune system in 'postmodern science'.

### *Racism*

Issues of gender, culture and 'race' intersect in Amina Mama's (1987) thesis, supervised by Wendy Hollway, and this material will be found in published form in Mama (forthcoming). There is a chapter in the Henriques *et al.* (1984) volume on racism. Connections between discourses of gender and colonialism are explored by Mills (1990). There have also been the following two studies of anti-Semitism which are closely informed by an attention to discourse (produced in a publishing collective which included Erica Burman): Cohen's (1984) book discusses the slippages that routinely occur on the Left between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism; Seidel's (1986b) book focuses on language and traces the influence of Right-wing historians in rewriting accounts of the Holocaust.

### *Institutions*

The links between discourses and institutional power are made with reference to

cognitive psychology and militarism by John Bowers (1990), and there are attempts to draw attention to the role of institutions as sites of power limiting interpretation in Parker (1989a). Hicks and Potter's (forthcoming) analysis of citation accounts in the disciplining of science connects Foucauldian work with the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge. An issue where these issues are salient, particularly in the light of Foucault's (1971) history of 'madness', is in the area of mental health. There is an interesting attempt to tie notions of discourse to clinical practice in Banton *et al.* (1985). Fairclough's (1990) recent introduction to discourse analysis, coming from linguistics but addressing issues of ideology and power, focuses on consumer and psychotherapy discourses. There is a (feminist) discourse analysis of (feminist) psychotherapy in Burman (in press).

### *Literary and other work*

Post-structuralist notions of discourse have found their way into psychology after (and often *via*) literary theory, and there are now [132] examples of critical writing which address texts as 'literary' products susceptible to (discourse-sensitive) literary analysis. Ashton (1990) discussed the plays of Harold Pinter in this way as a dissertation component of a psychology degree and Miall (1990) has discussed literary works as they pertain to clinical understandings of 'affect'. The developments in literary theory were first relayed into psychology in the new-paradigm literature, and Harré's (1979, 1983) foundation works for a new social and individual psychology include, in passing, many references to literary examples. Recently this has been taken further in an attention to discursive 'positioning' of selves (Davies and Harré, 1990). Deconstruction, in a way closely linked to literary theory, has been advertised as a tool to tease apart 'everyday explanation' in a study of radio soap opera (Parker, 1988a). Squire (1990a) uses the notion of discourse to demystify social psychology and, in a looser sense of deconstruction, social psychology is subjected to critique in various papers in Parker and Shotter (1990). Outside psychology, but a useful source on popular culture, is Redhead's (1990) survey, not confined to Manchester style, of postmodern 'post-political pop'.

### **Rhetoric**

Some of the material covered under the last heading could just as easily fit here, but I use this section to group together studies which trace the ideological functions of language without necessarily invoking either a conversational analytic notion of discourse (as a set of formal devices) or a post-structuralist description of discourses. The Billig *et al.* (1988) book provides a number of empirical studies (of education, health, prejudice and gender). Other related work is to be found in Billig's (1988d, 1990d) studies of the British royal family, in Ros Gill's (1991) work on gender, ideology and popular radio, in Mike Michael's (1986) work on masculinity and ordinary explanation and in Condor's (1988) paper on race stereotypes. Identity is the focus of Ullah's (1990) study of the rhetoric of second-generation Irish. The discourse of punk identity is explored by Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1990). Other work which is quite close to this style of work, in the sense of displaying an attention to the role of language in processes of argumentation (though, in other senses, quite different), are Stringer's (1990) study of textbook introductions to psychology and Sinason's (1989) study of the linguistics of

'equal opportunities'. [133] The Washington Discourse Analysis Group's work on the rhetoric of President Bush (WAUDAG, 1990) and on discourses of AIDS (WAUDAG, 1989) also connect with issues of representation and resistance.

## **Reflexivity**

The roots of this strand lie in studies of science and in ethnomethodology. Gilbert and Mulkay (1984) provide a good introduction to this sociology of scientific knowledge work (not least because the notion of discourse outlined there is one that Potter and Wetherell (1987) take up). This is further elaborated by Mulkay (1985). The collection edited by Woolgar (1988b) contains some examples in a variety of forms which attempt to display, in their very writing, their constructed nature. The ways in which non-scientists perceive science and technology policy is discussed by Michael (forthcoming). The ethnomethodological strand, concerned with problematising taken-for-granted assumptions, is best approached via an 'empirical' example, and a good one is to be found in Smith's paper (1984) on the labelling of a person ('K') as 'mentally ill'. Other work carried out at York in this reflexive climate includes Wooffitt's (1988) work on accounts of the paranormal and Ashmore's (1985, 1989) sociology of the sociology of science. The conversation analysis strand, like all quantitative approaches, does turn up some interesting material, and there are good examples in Atkinson's (1984) work on the rhetorical devices (three-part lists and contrasts) in political speeches, and in Grady and Potter's (1985) discussion of some of these devices in a British general election. Potter's contribution to the Howitt *et al.* (1989) introduction to social psychology, curiously, dwells on this tradition of work. This brings us full circle to the 'repertoires' tradition in full flow.

## **DISCOURSE-ORIENTATED CRITIQUES OF OTHER APPROACHES**

Discourse analysis has had to emerge through posing itself as a credible alternative to other approaches in psychology, and so there are some useful discussions of conceptual problems within the discipline now in the discourse literature. [134]

### *Cognitive psychology*

Cognitivist explanations, mainly focusing on accounts of prejudice, are tackled most thoroughly by Billig (1985, 1989b) through a discussion of the rhetorical devices used in speech to justify positions too sophisticated to justify reduction to schemas or suchlike. Cognitivism is tackled, with reference to politicians' memory problems, in Edwards and Potter's (1991) discussion of Neisser's ecological accounts. The public construction of 'facts' about 'memory' is explored at length in Edwards and Potter (in press). Cognitive psychology also comes under attack by Bowers (1990) who notes the not adventitious connections between hierarchical models of the mind and those of military technology. Sherrard (1988) looks at Chomsky's famous review of Skinner, and raises relevant issues here. Alternatives to cognitivism which argue the case for a (broadly Foucauldian) discourse-sensitive version of (Gibsonian) ecological psychology have been suggested by Michael and Still (forthcoming) and (in a version of Chapter 5 of this book coupled with

critical responses) Parker (forthcoming).

### *Attitudes*

The shortcomings of the concept of 'attitude' as an explanatory device are explored by Billig (1988a), and Potter and Wetherell (1987) deal with the problems fully in *Discourse and Social Psychology* along with role, trait and humanist accounts of personality.

### *Social representations*

Potter and Wetherell (1987) take on social representations theory. Social representations are tackled as well: by Litton and Potter (1985) which draws on 'riot' data to show the drawbacks of the framework; by Potter and Litton (1985) which pits the concept of social representations against the notion of interpretative repertoire; by McKinlay and Potter (1987b) who provide a critique of social representations from an implicitly discourse stance; and by McKinlay *et al.* (1990). The rhetoric position is compared with social representations by Billig (1988b, 1990c). Bhavnani (1990b) contrasts her work on 'discursive configurations' with social representations in ethnographic and interviewing studies of youth in Britain. The latent [135] cognitivism in social representations theory is tackled by Parker (1987a) and, in more explicit deconstructive spirit, by Parker (1989a).

### *Attribution theory*

The study of 'ordinary explanation' was dealt with by Michael (1986) in a series of studies which drew on the ideas that have since been explored by researchers concerned with power and subjectivity. Some of this thesis work appears in published form in Michael (1989). Parker (1989a) attempts an historically grounded deconstruction of attribution theory and the new-paradigm responses to it' and there is now a patient unravelling of the problems underlying attribution accounts by Potter and Edwards (1990) in which the critique revolves around ex-chancellor Lawson's memory failures after a journalists' lobby briefing on benefit cuts for old-aged pensioners.

### *Intergroup theory*

The Tajfel legacy (Social Identity Theory) has not been subjected to a thorough discourse critique (Wetherell has thesis research and publications in that area), though there is the basis for one in a paper by Reicher and Potter (1985). (Reicher also has thesis research and a publication record in this tradition.) Griffin's (1989) critique of the approach is also informed by a discourse background, and Ullah's (1990) study of the rhetoric of second-generation Irish explores the limits of the social identity framework. Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1990) situate their analyses of punk identity in 'social comparison' debates, and tackle the intergroup theory framework head-on in analyses of punk and goth identity accounts in another paper (Wooffitt and Widdicombe, 1990). There is a section on the problems in the approach for an understanding of racism by Henriques in Henriques *et al* (1984), and there is a good deconstructive assault on the approach by Michael (1990). *Deconstructing Social Psychology* (Parker and Shotter, 1990) contains a number of

critical chapters on different aspects of social psychology in general.

## **OTHER INTRODUCTORY TEXTS AND SOURCES**

'Introductions to discourse analysis' will be unhelpful as a general rule, though you will know as soon as you pick them up if they are [136] giving an introduction to one of the varieties of discourse analysis in linguistics or socio-linguistics (e.g., Brown and Yule, 1983; Coulthard, 1977; Coulthard and Montgomery, 1981; Stubbs, 1983). The aim of most of these versions seems to be a desperate attempt to subject language to quantifiable formal(ist) analysis. There is also a tradition of work called discourse analysis which is unashamedly cognitive (e.g., Bromberg, 1990) and/or biologically based (e.g., Joannette and Brownell, 1990). A good account of the recent thinking of the ex-University of East Anglia team (Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew) will be found in Hodge and Kress (1988).

### **Papers**

Apart from useful books by Potter and Wetherell (1987), Billig *et al.* (1988) and Hollway (1989) (together with Leith and Myerson's (1989) introduction to rhetoric from outside psychology and Fairclough's (1990) excellent introduction to Foucault's and Pêcheux's work from a linguistic direction), there are some helpful briefer introductions to this work. Two of the chapters in the Antaki (1988) volume - by Billig (1988c) on rhetoric and politically driven analysis (which is glossed, presumably tactically, under the rubric of 'scholarship') as opposed to the seemingly inevitable methods fetish in most research and by Wetherell and Potter (1988) on discourse analysis applied to New Zealand racists - are designed as introductions and empirical examples, and work well. There is an introductory overview of discourse analysis by Lalljee and Widdicombe (1989) in *Psychology Survey 7* which covers the Potter and Wetherell work and its roots in sociology of science (but which also connects it all rather too closely to conversation analysis). The ethogenic tradition is turning its attention to the organisation of language now, and there is a lucid extension of this approach to consider the positioning of the self in discourse by Davies and Harré (1990). The introduction to the Woolgar (1988b) edited collection *Knowledge and Reflexivity* is a good way in to reflexive issues.

### **Journals**

Work has been trickling into the social psychology journals like *British Journal of Social Psychology* and, more slowly, *European Journal of Social Psychology*, but as empirical research with little [137] prospect for theoretical debate. *Text* (edited by Tuen van Dijk who has recently moved closer to qualitative approaches) has included a number of discourse-analytic studies in recent years, though the 1990 special anniversary issue, 'looking ahead: discourse analysis in the 1990s', seems to see the future of the journal as tied to linguistics with a dab or two of conversation analysis. It is possible that *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* (set up by Harré and Secord in 1972 in the heyday of the new-paradigm debates) will be a forum for a discussion of the turn to discourse. New journals *Theory and Psychology* (co-edited by Potter) and *Feminism and Psychology* (open to developments in qualitative theory and research) are likely to feature discourse

material (e.g., Burman, 1990d). The key site for discourse data and debates, however, will be *Discourse & Society* which started in July 1990. (My cut-off date for the inclusion of references from this journal in this guide was the beginning of 1991.)

## Contacts

Activities of Discourse Groups in Britain are described by Ashmore (1985, 1989), Potter (1989, 1990) and Parker (1991a). Different Discourse Groups can be traced at the following addresses: Discourse and Representations Group (an administrative convenience rather than a functioning group, but an important link between psychology and debates in cultural theory) c/o Margaret Wetherell, Department of Social Science, Open University, Milton Keynes MK7 6AN; Discourse Group (influenced by feminist, Foucauldian and Marxist theory, and connecting discourse research with politics in edited work (Burman and Parker, forthcoming) which will contain further examples of good research by Gill, Kirkwood, McNaghten, Marks, Marshall, Moir, Stenner and Widdicombe not referenced in this guide) c/o Erica Burman, Department of Psychology and Speech Pathology, Manchester Polytechnic, Hathersage Road, Manchester M13 0JA; Discourse and Rhetoric Group (which compiles an up-to-date reference list of publications by its members, and so is worth contacting for a full picture of the Billig, Potter, Wetherell *et al.* work) c/o Michael Billig, Department of Social Sciences, Loughborough University of Technology, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3TU; Discourse Analysis Research Group (which produces the useful *DARG Newsletter*, based on Canadian/North American activities but also reporting on work in Europe) c/o [138] Newsletter Editor, Education Tower 1428, 2500 University Drive, N.W., Calgary AB, Canada, T2N 1N4; Hermeneutics, Rhetoric and Discourse Analysis Research Group c/o Professor Lorant Bencze, Lorand Eotvos University, Budapest H-1364, Pesti, B.u.l. Pf. 107, Hungary.

## CRITICAL RESPONSES

Psychology has dealt with discourse analysis so far by ignoring it and hoping it will go away. There are few critiques from within the dominant experimental tradition. It is entirely possible that positivist psychologists think that they said all that was to be said to the new-paradigm psychologists in the 1970s. Since most of the responses then (wrongly) targeted the supposed return to introspection, this is all the more disappointing. The new main introductory social psychology textbook (Hewstone *et al.*, 1988) published in Britain does not, and nor did its predecessor (Tajfel and Fraser, 1978), mention Harré, Shotter or the new-paradigm debates, let alone discourse analysis. The numerous American psychology texts, of course, do not mention these ideas. The judgement of the still dominant 'old paradigm' was well expressed recently as follows: 'There was little "research" of a recognisable kind, but a lot of talk and writing.... These ideas have had little practical application' (Argyle, 1989: 16). A good general critique of the *dangers* of qualitative research and simple 'empowerment' of the researched which appeared then, however, is by the now discourse-rhetorical Billig (1977). Billig's (1987) turn to rhetoric is sympathetically but rigorously reviewed by Reicher (1988) who locates the general many-sided argumentative nature of thought Billig proposes in a historical context. Billig

*et al's* (1988) *Ideological Dilemmas* is reviewed by Spears (1989).

*Discourse and Social Psychology* (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) is discussed in a long essay review by Bowers (1988) from a post-structuralist position. As well as focusing on the failure to include dialogical examples with the researcher's own interventions, Bowers raises the problem of the 'unitary subject' in their account. The problem of validating discourse analysis is discussed with an eye to Bourdieu's work by Sherrard (1991). There is a scathing review of conceptual and political problems with the practice of discourse analysis by Burman (in press b). The Foucauldian twist to discourse [139] connecting it with power and resistance appears in the journal *Philosophical Psychology* (Parker, 1990a), and this is criticised by Potter *et al* (1990) and attacked by Abrams and Hogg (1990) arguing from a fairly traditional positivist position. There is a review of Parker's (1989a) attempt to use Derridian and Foucauldian theory to find a way out of the crisis in modern social psychology by Hopkins (1990). A good (as could be hoped for, given the way the traditional categories are relentlessly subverted) review of Ashmore's (1989) reflexive thesis is by the sociologist of science Collins (1990).

## **THEORETICAL ISSUES**

Discourse has been explored for some time outside psychology, and the most interesting theoretical problems have been debated there. What follows here is a selection of texts which deal with some of these issues grouped under the headings of continental philosophy, realism and psychoanalysis.

### **Continental philosophy**

The tradition of philosophical writing in France and Germany this century has taken a very different tack to that of Anglo-American work. Against 'common-sense' analytic philosophy and pragmatism, continental theory has included complex, sometimes arcane discussions of the meaning of meaning. The tension between existentialist and structuralist traditions on the continent has transformed itself many times, and is expressed now in, among other forms, the opposition between critical theory and postmodernism. The best overall appraisal of the debates in both these traditions is by Dews (1987), though this is not a good place to start.

#### *The Posties*

Post-structuralist ideas are notoriously difficult to summarise, and often accounts involve a long detour through the problems of phenomenology and the rise of structuralism before the ideas of the main writers (Derrida, Foucault, Lacan) are arrived at. A lucid introduction, a good place to start, is provided by Sarup (1988). The philosophical underpinnings of the work are explored, for those with a background in the discipline, in Descombes (1980). There is a good [140] account of post-structuralist views of discourse in Macdonell (1986) which traces a route through Althusser and Hindess and Hirst to arrive at Foucault, and an excellent defence of the relevance of post-structuralist theory for feminism in Weedon (1987). A lucid introduction to the place of post-structuralism in literary theory is provided by Eagleton

(1983), and a good political defence of these ideas will be found in Belsey (1980). Easthope (1988) provides an overview of the development of post-structuralism in Britain since 1968, and a clear account of some the key ideas along the way. The disciplines covered include English literature, art history, cultural studies, the social sciences and psychology (in which he takes *Changing the Subject* to task). *The Crisis in Modern Social Psychology* (Parker 1989a) and *Deconstructing Social Psychology* (Parker and Shotter, 1990) explain and use post-structuralist ideas.

*Changing the Subject* (Henriques *et al.*, 1984) is the first thorough (complex) application of post-structuralism to psychology, and should be read, though perhaps after two other books by co-authors: Walkerdine (1988) uses the ideas to discuss the development of 'reason' in the child, and Hollway (1989) develops the ideas clearly in relation to a (broadly Foucauldian) version of discourse analysis. Gavey (1989) provides an overview of the relationship between feminism, post-structuralism and discourse analysis.

The interest in the constitutive power of language in poststructuralist work mutated recently into a series of claims about the state of culture in which this work could seem plausible and attractive. Postmodernism is now sometimes used as a code-word for post-structuralism, and the type of culture in which all meaning shifts and slips as fast as post-structuralists think it does is postmodernity. The classic text for discussions of postmodernity is Lyotard's (1984), but a better introduction is to be found in the Jameson (1984) article. The Doherty *et al.* (1991) collection provides an overview of the development of postmodernism in the social sciences, with contributions on sociology, geography and international relations. In this volume there are papers by Bowers (1991) on cognitive psychology, Burman (1991) on developmental psychology and Parker (1991b) on social psychology.

The most useful attacks on post-structuralism, alongside spirited defences of modernity, are by Habermas (1981) and followers. The Billig *et al.* (1988) volume mentions Habermas only in passing (and not favourably), but is the closest in discourse theory in psychology [141] at the moment to a Habermasian position. The best philosophical assessment of the posties from the critical theory tradition is still Dews (1987).

### *Journals*

These ideas, as with new qualitative approaches in psychology, have been fired by feminism, and an excellent new American journal, *differences*, has already, since starting in 1989, included Foucauldian styles of discourse analysis. (It does look as if it might get a bit heavy on the theory from time to time, a risk all texts in this area take.) Three new relevant journals were launched by Routledge in 1987: *New Formations* views culture through a post-structuralist lens, and has already contained some interesting discourse work; *Cultural Studies* focuses on popular culture, and is explicitly concerned with theories of discourse and power; *Textual Practice* is pitched at a literary theory audience, but is worth browsing through to get a sense of the direction of debates (which may one day seep into psychology). These journals are sensitive to issues of racism as well as gender, but there is also a need for journals such as *Third Text* which take up race, colonialism and anti-racist politics as they are mediated by discourse.

## Realism

The relativism which post-structuralism seems to entail is discussed from a Marxist standpoint, alongside a consideration of Habermas, by Anderson (1983), and radicals worried about the dangers of relativism have turned to debates in the philosophy of science (and now social science) over the value of realism.

A clear exposition of the critical realist position will be found in the first chapter of Bhaskar (1989), though the other chapters can be heavy-going. There is also a good overview by Outhwaite (1987) which compares the realist position with that of hermeneutics and critical theory. There is a dear review of the realist as opposed to three other views of social structure by Porpora (1989), and another good account by Isaac (1990) which is marred, though, by a bizarre attempt to argue that realism is, in some way, postmodern. Both of these papers appear in *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* which was set up as a forum for debate by Harré and Secord, and which has often carried useful papers on realist debates in social science. [142]

The various political implications of the discourse position once it becomes disconnected from a form of materialism can be traced on the Left in Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) avowedly 'post-Marxist' text, and in Seidel's (1986a) account of the Right's use of Gramsci and discourse eory deliberately to recast the terms of debate over culture and 'race'. There is a thorough, caustic response to the Laclau and Mouffe argument by Geras (1987), and an (even angrier) exchange follows from this (Laclau and Mouffe, 1987; Geras, 1988). The worst political implications of post-structuralism have been explored well: Dews (1979) shows how Foucault was taken up by some of the (Maoist) far Left in France and mutated into a version of the far Right; Stern (1990) works through some of the consequences of Derrida's response to the discovery that De Man, a (dead) prominent American deconstructionist published in pro-Vichy papers during the war.

## Psychoanalysis

Wendy Hollway (1989) uses Lacanian approaches in a clear way (unusually for this material), and also brings in a Kleinian account of defence mechanisms in her interpretation of the discourse of heterosexual couples talking about their relationships. She quotes Stephen Frosh (1987) a lot, and his book is a clear outline of Freudian and post-Freudian theory (including some object-relations, Reichian and post-Lacanian writing). Frosh (1989b) also has some useful material on psychoanalysis and discourse in a chapter on gender and language. There is a full length essay review of Hollway's book by Widdicombe (1990) which is both critical and sympathetic. The production of the 'ego' in psychoanalytic discourse is discussed by Parker (in press).

Another example, which traces the symbolic and emotional resonances of equal opportunities language using psychoanalysis, is to be found in Sinason (1989). Psychoanalysis is connected in a more difficult theoretical way by Henriques *et al.* (1984), and this includes fascinating work by Urwin connecting Lacanian and Foucauldian accounts of language. The connections between post-Kiemian psychoanalysis and postmodernism are explored by Rustin (1989), and the possible realist basis for psychoanalysis in practice is discussed by Rustin (1987). Reflexivity and

psychoanalysis are also discussed in relation to a piece of empirical research in Walkerdine [143] (1986). The most useful journal, one which is heavily slanted to the Kleinian and object-relations tradition but which contains articles by writers sympathetic to Habermas and those working through Lacan's work, is *Free Associations*. [end of page 143]