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1   **Q:** Your name, Professor Norman Fairclough, is automatically associated with Critical Discourse Analysis. Would you like to circumscribe, theoretically speaking, this area of studies?

2   **A:** Yeah... I think it began in Britain. I mean in a sense it is very difficult to trace its beginning, because elements of this approach to language certainly are much older than its recent manifestation. But it is nevertheless worth referring to what was called in Britain critical linguistics, which was being published in the late seventies and early eighties, particularly at the university of East Anglia, associated with Roger Fowler, but also Gunther Kress, Tony Trew and Bob Hodge. They were the main people. And their approach was basically to see how a functional approach to language study could be adapted to addressing a range of problems that people tended not to address in analyzing language. So there were various models and frameworks for textual analysis – more or less sophisticated – around, including the Hallidayan approach they were adopting. On the other hand, there was an emergent literature on questions of ideology and questions of power that was increasingly referring to this entity called «discourse».

3   **Q:** You mean cultural studies...

4   **A:** Well, cultural studies, Foucault, also Althusser and political theory. Pêcheux in France who was already trying to make that link between theories of ideology and methods of analyzing discourse. But there was a gap between textual analysis and social analysis, while at the same time social theorists were saying very loudly language is terribly important in power and ideology and so on. So they were attempting to fill that gap and I think that's where... the critical discourse analysis project is really a continuation of that. I mean it has taken its own theoretical direction since, but

basically it's about trying to bring together closer analysis of texts with addressing a range of social issues.

5   **Q:** Is Critical Discourse Analysis more a method than a theory? Or, is it both things?

6   **A:** It's both, I think. It's both, because, on the one hand, it's a ... well it's always very difficult, because people tend to think critical discourse analysis as a unitary entity. It's not. There are various positions in critical discourse analysis and, in fact, my own position has changed quite a lot over the years. So there are various approaches in critical discourse analysis, but certainly within that there is an important theoretical element, because people are trying to grasp the theoretical status of discourse and language in relation to other theoretical entities and concepts. So, you know, what is the relationship of discourse to institutions, to power, to ideology? So there's a lot of theoretical work going on there, but it transcends the boundaries of critical discourse analysis. So it is very often a dialogue with theoreticians of other areas who are also asking these questions. But at the same time it is a method ... I mean, I prefer the term methodology to method, actually for reasons we can go into if you like, but it is also concerned with providing systematic means of approaching text in ways that are framed by this broader set of social concerns.

7   **Q:** You have just referred to a distinction between method and methodology. In what sense?

8   **A:** I would use the term methodology to describe the process whereby one arrives at researchable objects for topics one is interested in. I draw quiet a lot, for instance, on Bourdieu's work on this. So methodology is a highly theoretical process. It resists this opposition between theory and method in a sense. So in the process of formulating ... if one is interested, for instance, in the question of the public sphere. How exactly does one theorize this entity, this something, «the public sphere» in order to research it? How do you find a researchable form? And do you find a researchable form that allows you to give a particular focus to language and a particular semiotic point of entry into the research? So, it's defining an object of research, which is a process which involves a lot of theorization. Then there are particular methods that you use for analyzing texts or whatever.

9   **Q:** To what extent is Critical Discourse Analysis an empowering tool, or to put it differently, a democratic resource for students of Social Sciences and Humanities?

10 **A:** Well, that's, as they say, an empirical question. But I can think of many cases, particularly when this approach was relatively new, of teaching it to classes of students who responded sometimes with real excitement and, you know, they basically said, «we've never thought about looking at language in this sort of way». So for them it was clearly some form of ... I don't know whether you'd want to talk about empowerment, but it was giving them a resource for thinking critically about society that they hadn't had before. And since many of these would be students of language, suddenly leading them to look at the way they were working with language in a much more socially and politically rich way. So, in my experience, it certainly can be, it has been an important critical resource for students who have political concerns of a broadly democratic nature.

11 **Q:** Critical Discourse Analysis uses several theoretical/analytical categories. I would dare to say that one of the most central ones is the concept of «order of discourse», in conjunction with «articulation» and «interdiscursivity». Do you agree?

12   **A:** Well, they are important categories, but there are other important categories. I mean the theory has developed over time. So order of discourse was a category that I appropriated from Foucault a long time ago, while giving it a rather different sense from Foucault's. That's important, because it accentuates the idea that critical discourse analysis is always oscillating between two levels of concern: text, so what's happening in particular texts, and practices which are more or less stabilized, institutionalized and so on, but also that stabilization and institutionalization has a discourse aspect and that's the sense in which I used order of discourse. So when one thinks of any institution or organization, a university, for example, one way of looking at it is a particular configuration of practices, as an order of discourse, that is, it has its distinctive particular articulation of genres, of discourses and styles that distinguishes it from other organizations or institutions or the same sort of organization at a different point in time. One aspect of social changes is changes in order of discourse. So it's an important category, but so also is interdiscursivity. Interdiscursivity is linked to that, because interdiscursivity is looking, at the level of text, at how the social resource of orders of discourse – this resource at the level of practices – is actually drawn upon concretely by social agents in situated ways in actual text, because text can also be looked at as mixing together diverse genres, diverse discourses, diverse styles. So there are two levels of statement that are both in a sense focusing upon this potentiality for hybridity, for mixing, for recombining, within an overall perspective on social change. But there are other important categories. I would mention recontextualization, which actually came in the late nineties in Lilie Chouliaraki's PH.D. research, and then we took it up in the book, *Discourse in Late Modernity*, and that points to another important feature of the framework which is transdisciplinarity. That is, it develops itself through a transdisciplinary dialogue with other theories and approaches. In this case, Basil Bernstein's sociology of pedagogy. That's where the concept of recontextualization comes from. But what we did was to appropriate it for critical dis-course analysis, by translating it into a set of relations between discourse analytical categories, genre, genre chain, discourse, and so on.

13   **Q:** Let's leave theoretical matters for the time being and move on to applied studies, particularly *New Labour, New Language?* (2000) and *Language and Globalization?* (2006). According to some analysts, New Labour contained many Thatcherite ideas superbly repackaged for the modern era, which leads us to the pervasiveness of spinning and the importance of language use. Language has always been a decisive rhetorical tool in politics, but why do you think it has become such a crucial factor in New Labour's strategy and victories?

14   **A:** Well, I think that there are various dimensions to language in New Labour. Stuart Hall, quite a number of years ago now, did an analysis of Thatcherism and he drew attention to the particular character of Thatcherite dis-course, regarding it as a new articulation of discursive elements that had been around in the political field. And one can say the same sort of thing about the discourse of *The Third Way*, Blair's political discourse. So I think one issue is the nature of the political discourse. Changes in politics can be understood, one might say, in that sort of way. There's also the important factor of the relative instability of political discourses now as compared with an era ... twenty, thirty years ago. So that makes language in a sense more important than it was once. To understand the political ideology, one has to keep an eye on the shifting process that is going on all the time in political text. So the language becomes

more important in that sort of sense. But, on another level, if one thinks of media spinning, for instance, I mean this is not so much a question of political ideology, it is more a question of the mode of government or governance. And this is what I was talking about in my lecture yesterday. Media spin can be seen as … I mean media spin is not distinctive to New Labour or indeed distinctive to Thatcherism. Arguably governments have always spun to a certain extent, but it's a matter of the systematic deployment of resources for managing the process of mediation. I mean that's quantitatively or probably qualitatively different. So it's really a question of how important this process of managing language in a wider sense is in the particular mode of government which is being adopted, and one can see that it does seem to be the case with New Labour. So the way they govern, the way they're reinventing government, does put a lot of weight on, for instance, such perspectives as cultural governance, where the government sees its role very much as intervening to shape cultures, the cultures of civil servants, the cultures of employers, the cultures of welfare benefit recipients, of citizens and so on. And to do that one needs a strong central management of language. So I think there are various factors that make language distinctively important. Not that it wasn't important under Thatcher or whatever.

15   **Q:** Isn't this current obsession with media spinning and salesmanship turning democracies into a sort of simulacrum (to use Jean Baudrillard's expression), a signified without a signifying?

16   **A:** Well, I think that there's a real problem about democracy now, yeah, and one can put this in various ways. I mean, one category that I think is relevant here is the category of depoliticization. One account, one might consider, for instance, is that an effect of neo-liberalism and the hegemony of neo-liberalism internationally is to push governments into being, before everything else, way-stations or nodes for the neo-liberal project. So governments are basically in the business of creating the conditions or the possibility for the successful participation of their own economies in the global economy. So it's a change in the function of the state and of government. And this is very often interpreted as entailing a need to get away from the old political divisions. So to create consensus, to depoliticize, to get everyone behind the national effort for ever greater competitiveness and so on. So I think these sorts of processes are arguably going on.

17   **Q:** Blairism, if there is such a thing as Blairism, goes with third way poli-tics, a discursive practice that combines ideas and principles which are apparently paradoxical. Neither neo-liberalism, nor socialism, but outcomes politics. Do you think that third way politics and its discursive practices – which far transcend Britain – disguise the interests of multinationals and capital flows, thus shedding light on the weakness of the nation-sate that is submerged into broader forms of organization?

18   **A:** Yeah … Well, Stuart Hall's analysis of New Labour is quite interesting here. He talks about New Labour's «double shuffle», and what he means by that is New Labour's trying to balance opposites, if you like, balance contradictory demands. On the one hand, it is firmly committed to a neo-liberal agenda, economically first and foremost, but also an international agenda. Of course it's the same agenda that one can see in the US, and more or less dominant in other European countries. There's quite a lot of diversity within this. But, on the other hand, it has needed politically to differentiate itself from neo-liberalism and from Thatcherism and the New Right, by keeping some element of credibility as being in the Labour tradition, so having some sort of social democratic

element. And Hall's analysis is that basically. You know, one can say as people have said of New Labour … yes, it's trying to say neither this nor that, neither neo-liberal, nor social-democratic, but one also always has to look at the relative weight in the concrete reality of the two. And his argument like that of many others is that it is always the neo-liberal that comes out on top. So the concessions towards a more social democratic agenda, towards a social policy agenda, that's there, so it's not that it's not there, but if it comes to a crunch, if there's a choice between that and fitting into the neo-liberal agenda, if you like, it's the neo-liberal agenda that wins out.

19   **Q:** Right. So you apparently agree with Stuart Hall's analysis that neo- -liberalism is the trend that is ultimately the most important one?

20   **A:** Yeah, yeah, I think so.

21   **Q:** Blair's rhetorical expertise as a politician was soon revealed after he took office in 1997. I'm referring to Princess Diana's death and his speech to frame her mourning and burial according to the expectations of «middle England». Why did this «expertise» apparently fail him nine or ten years later?

22   **A:** I don't think the expertise failed him at all. And he is still a very clever guy and a very clever speaker, but you need more than being a clever speaker or a clever mathematician or whatever to be credible. And, you know, it's not simply that Blair stands up and he is less credible on the night. It's that people look at Blair on the night and remember everything else that Blair has done since, whereas, when he spoke about Princess Diana, he did it with a relatively clean slate. No one had anything against him. Now they have a great deal against him. So he can be as clever as he likes, but people don't find him credible any more.

23   **Q:** So the same thing didn't happen with the Iraq war.

24   **A:** No, right, right. Well, the Iraq war has been crucial to this loss of credibility. People have seen that he lied and misrepresented …

25   **Q:** As you have written in *New Labour, New Language*: «the communicative style of leaders is now recognized as a crucial factor in political success or failure» (2000: 4), and by communicative style, you meant not only verbal language, but bodily performance (gestures, facial expressions, dress and hair-style and so forth). Do you think the current British PM, Gordon Brown, is sufficiently equipped for this era?

26   **A:** Well, I think, you know, that one answer for that is to say that there's more wrong with the era than with Gordon Brown, which I have a certain amount of sympathy for, but not too much, because I think there are problems with Gordon's politics as well from my point of view. But obviously he is not as sleek as Blair. He is not such an accomplished media performer and so on as Blair. And, you know, I think it is very unfortunate that that in itself counts against a man who is obviously a very good politician, even though I very much disagree with some of his policies.

27   **Q:** Now talking about globalization. In *Language and Globalization*, you made a distinction between *globalization* and *globalism*, and you wrote that «a discourse like the discourse of globalism can be seen as a sort of node around which various different discourses cluster». (2006: 36) Would you like to comment on this?

28   **A:** Yeah … Globalism is the name I used in the book *Language and Globalization* for a particular strategy for operating within globalization. Right, it basically says there are these forces that are going on that we have to deal with in some way or another. This is

a strategy to deal with them. So, it's an attempt, if you like, to push globalization in certain directions. Notably in the direction of saying that the whole world really has to become neo-liberal in orientation. Of course, in reality, the whole world is no such thing, but it's an attempt to push it in that direction, if you like. And as such it's been going on for a couple of decades or more, but in the course of that time things have changed and the strategy has adapted to these changes. So now if you look, for instance, at the American policy, strategy and statements around the war on terror, one finds within those documents globalism in the sense of a great deal of material also on the commitment to free trade and free markets and so on, tied in with and articulated with the fight against global terrorism. So these are made to be part of the same discourse. In this case, it's not globalization as such we are talking about. We're talking about this particular dis-course of globalization which interprets war on terror in relation to a set of assumed agreed economic and political objectives which are summed up in the expression one hears «free markets and democracy». So it's this idea that a discourse can have a continuity, but a continuity through a series of adaptations, which amount in discourse analytical terms to a discourse operating as a node and attracting other discourses into what becomes a very complex entity. A capital *D-discourse*, as James Gee put it years ago. He suggested that we distinguished capital *D-discourses* and *small d-discourses. Capital D-discourses* are basically larger entities with a greater durability that incorporate and articulate *small d-discourses.*

29   **Q:** According to you, globalization is a multi-voiced discourse. Which are the most influential and effective voices in the process? There are many voices, we've got governments, the media, NGOs, people in their everyday lives ...

30   **A:** Well, I think there are many discourses of globalization. I mean there isn't just a discourse of globalization. Globalism is one discourse of globalization. But there are others and in the book, for instance, I looked at the former Malaysian Prime Minister who has taken his own very strong view on globalization. One can identify quite different discourses. If one looks at the discourses of environmentalists and green groups, their discourses of globalization are vey different from that of globalism. So there are many dis-courses more or less in contention. Sometimes they don't have very much influence compared with the more dominant ones.

31   **Q:** Talking about the relationship between business/neo-liberalism and higher education: how is this discursively materialized?

32   **A:** Well, I wrote a paper a number of years ago, published I think in 1992, or maybe later, in 1993, on the marketization of universities in Britain, which someone was kind enough recently to refer to as a prophetic paper. I don't know if it was very politically prophetic, but it was saying things that have certainly proved themselves to be more obvious now than they were then. Basically it was arguing that the whole process of marketizing, managerializing universities is a process that is largely a discursive process and certainly in a sense is initiated discursively. So what we are basically talking about is the strategy of certain groups to push universities in certain directions. The strategy appears first in the form of discourses, its imaginaries for what universities could be like, very often when they are anything but that. So you have one group that is pushing a particular imaginary, a particular strategy and using particular discourses to do that and then from this analytical point of view there is the point where a particular discourse or set of dis-courses becomes hegemonic. Then there is the possibility of an operationalization of these discourses. They get enacted in the

form of practices, they get inculcated in the form of styles, in the form of identities, they get materialized in aspects of the physical organization of universities. So that's a discourse- -led view of these processes of managerialization and marketization, centrally emphasizing – and this is not particularly a discourse analytical notion – the idea that there is a strategic struggle over these changes and particular strategies are associated with particular discourses that then can be operationalized and practiced.

33 **Q:** When, more specifically, do you think this movement started?

34 **A:** It's very difficult to pinpoint these things, but certainly this movement was given a big push by Thatcherism. Thatcherite policies were very much geared to forcing elite professional institutions or ivory-tower institutions as you might put it into the real world, right? So this was going on from the early eighties in Britain.

35 **Q:** Regardless of its various dimensions, should we also include the Bologna Process in this larger movement?

36 **A:** A central aspect of the Bologna Process is quality assurance. Quality assurance was there in the eighties with Thatcher's reforms and of course the whole model of quality comes from private business. I remember a number of years ago a colleague of mine, when first this idea of quality came into universities, saying: «What on earth do people mean by quality? They don't mean excellence, they mean something obviously rather special.» And he was referred to the British Standards definition of quality. There's an official definition of quality and basically he phoned up the British Standards authority and said: «What do you mean by quality?» – « Well, basically there's no distinction, as far as we are concerned, between a university and a factory that manufactures water bottles.» The same notion of quality is at issue in both cases. And you know, that's maybe an exaggerated, a sort of extreme version of the point, but quality itself as a way of measuring goodness is a concept that points to the managerialization, marketization of the universities and that is a central part of the Bologna Process.

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