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WHORF'S CHILDREN:
CRITICAL COMMENTS ON CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA)

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ABSTRACT

CDA has been a frequent topic at BAAL and AILA. Yet one critic, basically sympathetic (Stubbs 1994), comments on "major unresolved criticisms of its data and theory", while another, much less sympathetic (Widdowson 1995a, b, 1996), argues that CDA involves basic conceptual confusions.

Benjamin Lee Whorf posed a still unresolved question: do diverse languages influence the habitual thought of their speakers? CDA shifts this question to different patterns of use within a single language, but it makes no clear claim as to how language use might affect habitual thought. Studies of language use and cognition must be comparative: but CDA provides no systematic comparisons between texts and norms in the language. Also, language and thought can only be related, if one has data and theory pertinent to both: otherwise the theory is circular. The paper discusses, not entirely optimistically, whether CDA can be rescued from circularity. Via brief case studies, it illustrates how individual texts can be studied against an intertextual background of normative data from large historical and contemporary corpora, of the discourse of likely readers of the texts, and a socio-historical analysis of the dissemination and reception of texts.

Introduction

A model of language which has evolved very fast in the 1990s is an approach to textual commentary known as critical discourse analysis (CDA). In a period of only a few years, it has become very influential, and has been the subject of many papers, including plenaries, at both BAAL and AILA. Although, in this paper, I make several criticisms of CDA, I hope my comments will be taken in a positive spirit. Many of the observations made in CDA seem to me to be correct. I think, however, that the analyses could be strengthened by comparative and quantitative methods, and that the logic of the position could be better argued.

Definition

It is because CDA raises important social issues, that it is worthwhile trying to strengthen its analyses. CDA argues that there are relations between language, power and ideology, and between how the world is represented in texts and how people think about the world. The following definitions cover several essential points:

> "Critical Discourse Analysts [...] feel that it is [...] part of their professional role to investigate, reveal and clarify how power and discriminatory value are inscribed in and mediated through the linguistic system: Critical Discourse Analysis is essentially political in intent." (Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard 1996: xi.)

> "Critical linguistics [...] formulated an analysis of public discourse, an analysis designed to get at the ideology coded implicitly behind the overt propositions [...] Critical linguistics insists that all representation is mediated, moulded by the value systems that are ingrained in the medium [...] The proponents [...] are concerned to use linguistic analysis to expose misrepresentation [...] the critical linguist is crucially concerned with the relativity of representation." (Fowler 1996: 3, 4, 10.)

Key concepts include: representation, mediation, implicit or hidden meanings, and the explicitly political aim of analysing power and inequality, not just to interpret the world but to change the world. In addition to this critique of ideology, important themes are the relation between changes in discourse and wider sociocultural change, and the claim that language has acquired new functions in the late-modern world (Fairclough 1992). However, the two themes are closely connected, since they both concern relations between ways of talking and ways of thinking, and I will here treat them together.

I will take as representative two books which have the phrase "critical discourse analysis" in the title (Fairclough 1995a, Caldas-Coulthard & Coulthard 1996) and four other books by Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995a, b). Also relevant is work by Fowler (1991a), Hodge and Kress (1988, 1993), Kress (1990), and Meinhof & Richardson (1994). Caldas-Coulthard & Coulthard (1996: xi) regard "the leading names in the field" to be Fairclough, Fowler, Kress, van Dijk, van Leeuven, and Wodak.

Criticisms

CDA aims to provide social criticism which is based on firm linguistic evidence: both politically committed and grounded in "systematic and detailed textual analysis" (Fairclough 1995a: 187). However I will question the extent to which CDA meets "standards of careful, rigorous and systematic analysis" (Fairclough & Wodak 1997: 259). I will mostly formulate my criticisms as a series of questions, since I think that some of them can be answered. However, the paper is not entirely optimistic, and I will argue that CDA is unavoidably circular in certain respects.

Some sharp criticisms have been around for a long time, but remain unanswered. A repeated criticism is that the textual interpretations of critical linguists are politically rather than linguistically motivated, and that analysts find what they expect to find, whether absences or

presences. Sharrock and Anderson (1981) are ironic with reference to critical linguists such as Kress and Fowler:

> "[O]ne of the stock techniques employed by Kress and his colleagues is to look in the wrong place for something, then complain that they can't find it, and suggest that it is being concealed from them."

Amongst many criticisms, Widdowson (1995a, b, 1996) also criticizes CDA for a political agenda which is not clearly grounded in linguistic analysis, and he is severe in his overall characterizations of Fairclough (1992):

> "[...] essentially sociological or socio-political rather than linguistic [...] an impressive display of apparent scholarship [...] profligate with terms whose conceptual significance is uncertain [...] interpretation in support of belief takes precedence over analysis in support of theory [...] perhaps conviction counts for more than cogency." (1995b.)

Perhaps particularly significant are criticisms by Fowler (1996: 8, 12), one of the originators of critical linguistics:

> "[M]ajor problems remain with critical linguistics [...] [D]emonstrations [tend] to be fragmentary, exemplificatory, and they usually take too much for granted in the way of method and of context. [...] [N]owadays it seems that anything can count as discourse analysis [...] [T]here is a danger [of] competing and uncontrolled methodologies drawn from a scatter of different models in the social sciences."

These quotations express several fundamental criticisms: that CDA's methods of data collection and text analysis are inexplicit, that the data are often restricted to text fragments, and that it is conceptually circular, in so far as its own interpretations of texts are as historically bound as anyone else's, and that it is a disguised form of political correctness.

For other criticisms, see Candlin's introduction to Fairclough (1995a: viii-ix) on theoretical and methodological problems, and Hammersley (1996) on problems with CDA's relation to "critical theory". In a more sympathetic overview, Richardson (1987) points to problems with the frequent metaphors of visibility and concealment.

The Essential Questions

I will concentrate on questions of data, description and theory. The first is:

Q1. By what criteria can CDA's textual analyses be evaluated?

How does CDA stand up to evaluation against standard criteria such as the explicitness and testability of underlying hypotheses, the replicability of methods of analysis and the reliability of results (such that different analysts would produce the same analysis), comprehensive coverage of data, and representativeness of data?

In particular, CDA never explicitly answers the question of what relation is claimed between formal features of texts and their interpretation. Indeed, I think contradictory views are taken.

On the one hand, both Fairclough (1989: 110ff) and Fowler (1991a: 66ff) provide lists of formal linguistic features which are likely to be ideologically significant, and such features are cited in analyses. On the other hand, both Fairclough (1995a: 71) and Fowler (1991b: 90, 1996: 9) emphasize that ideology cannot be read off texts in a mechanical way, since there is no one-to-one correspondence between forms and functions.

On the one hand, a text is seen as a series of traces left by the processes of production. On the other hand, these traces may be ambiguous. A commonly cited example is that an agentless passive has no self-evident ideological reading: it may be used manipulatively to conceal human agency, but it may be used because the human agent is irrelevant, or obvious to everyone from background knowledge, or already known because previously mentioned in the text, or it may simply be used to make the sentence shorter.

Therefore CDA's descriptive claims are often unclear. In any case, if it is not possible to read the ideology off the texts, then the analysts themselves are reading meanings into texts on the basis of their own unexplicated knowledge. (The circularity problem.)

This question can be formulated from the point of view of the text itself or the readers of the text. Fowler (1996: 7) points out that in much (all?) work in CDA, "the reader simply is not theorized". So an alternative formulation of question 1 is:

Q2. What source of interpretative authority does CDA claim?

CDA warns us that there are no brute facts and no disinterested texts, and emphasizes the force of history and of one's point of view. But if there are no disinterested texts, it follows that CDA is not itself immune to these points, and that its own interpretations also embody interests. The fact that this is noted from time to time by practitioners does not get CDA out of this particular Catch 22. We cannot have it both ways.

I move now to more specific descriptive claims.

Q3. What descriptive claim is being made about mixed texts?

In the context of an argument that changing ways of talking are inherently related to wider processes of cultural change, Fairclough (e.g. 1995a: 142ff, 192ff) observes that many texts are hybrids: for example, both academic writing and political debates on television are becoming more colloquial. It is a common observation that public language in general (including much written academic language) is becoming less formal, that many texts (for example, in advertising) are heterogeneous, and that such mixing is a statistical phenomenon (Coseriu 1988: 26ff).

However, Fairclough makes no precise descriptive claims in this area. He points to a phenomenon which is essentially quantitative, but provides no quantitative findings for individual texts, no comparisons between different texts or text types, no quantitative diachronic findings that textual heterogeneity is increasing, and indeed no methods for calculating heterogeneity in texts. A claim is made about a probabilistic phenomenon, but no refutable findings or methods are provided.

Like many approaches to stylistic variation, CDA has a strong tendency either to analyse just a few stylistic features (sometimes a single word, such as *enterprise*: see Fairclough 1995a: 112), or to conceive of stylistic variation in terms of simple dichotomies, such as public and private, or homogeneous and heterogeneous. Yet it is well known that registers are very rarely defined by individual features, but consist of clusters of associated features which have a greater than chance tendency to co-occur: such a concept is argued in great empirical detail by Biber (1988, 1995). This view of register variation is essential to the Hallidayan perspective often cited within CDA.

These points leave us with the question of exactly what link is being claimed between ways of talking and ways of thinking. So, the next question involves the essential theoretical claim made in CDA.

Q4. What relation is claimed between language use and cognition?

CDA discusses both how discourse is shaped by power and ideologies, and also how discourse has an effect on social identities and systems of belief. Language use is both "socially shaped and socially constitutive" (Fairclough 1995a: 131, and elsewhere). Given this dialectic, it is all the more difficult to state what relations are being claimed. In Fairclough (1995a), the topic under discussion is clear enough in a general way - the micro-macro links between language use and social institutions - and this topic can be seen from such quotes as the following (my emphasis added):

> "language in its relation to power and ideology" (p.1.)
>
> "discourse has taken on a major role in sociocultural reproduction" (p.2)
>
> "texts are social spaces in which two fundamental social processes simultaneously occur: cognition and representation of the world, and social interaction" (p.6)
>
> "texts [are] sensitive indicators of sociocultural processes and change" (p.8)
>
> "discourse conventions are a most effective mechanism for sustaining hegemonies" (p.91).

So much is clear. But I am not clear what precise meaning is to be given to terms such as relations, role, processes, indicators and mechanism. CDA aims to be a theory of the relation between cognition and the textual representation of reality. But I am uncertain about the extent to which cause and effect relations are being claimed, about the nature of evidence which textual traces are said to provide of social change, and so on. Briefly, I am not convinced that CDA provides testable claims about such relations. There are two more precise sub-questions which I am sure CDA does not answer:

Q5. How does language use actually affect habitual thought?

CDA is a theory of how things come to be taken for granted. A constant argument is that many of our beliefs and representations might seem simply natural, but they are naturalized. But CDA is vague about the actual mechanisms whereby such influences operate. An even more concrete sub-question is:

Q6. How does frequency of use relate to naturalization?

CDA presents no theory about the role of repetition in such influences. In common with linguistics in general, it has no theory of how our ways of seeing the world are influenced cumulatively by repeated phrasings in texts. Exactly what is the relation between frequency of use and cognition?

All studies in this area have to address the severe logical problem of potential circularity, so the next question is:

Q7. Can CDA escape from circular language-cognition claims?

The empirical question is: What non-linguistic evidence of cognition is provided? I have already cited Sharrock and Anderson's (1981) arguments that a basic aim of critical linguistics is to determine what is revealed or concealed in a text, but that much work is circular, because analysts "know perfectly well at the outset" just what political position they are going to find.

So how could circularity be avoided? The basic claim of CDA (and of Whorfian views) is that languages or uses of language implicitly classify experience, and that these categories influence a person's view of reality. There is therefore an essential criterion for any research. There must be non-linguistic evidence of a pattern of beliefs and behaviour. If language and thought are to be related, then one needs data and theory pertinent to both. If we have no independent evidence, but infer beliefs from language use, then the theory is circular. This may be the most difficult type of evidence to provide, but there is no way around this demand, especially in light of the constant claim in CDA that certain meanings are hidden from speakers and hearers, and can be revealed only by certain types of analysis.

Although it is frequently emphasized that, as well as the texts themselves, one should study "how texts are produced, distributed and consumed" (Fairclough 1995a: 1), CDA fails here to meet its own criterion. So a variant of question 7 is:

Q8. What are the relations between text, addressor and addressee?

Audience reception work is common in media studies, but not in CDA. Note again, that the question of two possible sources of interpretative authority, text and audience, is not tackled by CDA itself. The criterion that one should study text production and consumption could be met only by ethnographic studies of social institutions. Some such studies are available outside CDA. For example, Bell (1991) has studied, not only as a linguist but as a working journalist, the interactive processes which lie behind the production of newspaper texts. News media offer "the classic case of language produced by multiple parties" (p.33), in which journalist, editor and sub-editor all handle a text and modify its language, cutting, reordering, and rewriting in accordance with a house style, and providing links, visuals and headlines. When a locally authored news story is transmitted internationally via news agencies such as Reuters, then the multiple-author production process is even more complex.

Q9. How can comparative studies be designed?

Since the essential claim concerns differences caused by different language use, it follows that studies of language use and cognition must be comparative. Only very few CDA studies compare individual texts, or compare features of texts with norms in the language, or compare text types diachronically. These are all cases where it is not too difficult to see how such gaps could be filled. For example, Krishnamurty (1996) studies both individual texts and also data from different large corpora, totalling some 140 million running words, to study the assumptions underlying the words *ethnic*, *racial* and *tribal*. And Fairclough and Mauranen (in press) compare extracts from political television interviews in English and Finnish.

One can also reformulate these questions from the point of view of data.

Q10. How are data selected? Are they representative?

In its simplest formulation, the criticism here is that not much data is analysed. More generally, there is very little discussion of whether it is adequate to restrict analysis to short fragments of data, how data should be sampled, and whether the sample is representative. Often data fragments are presented with no justification at all that they are representative. However, consider the following case in which questionable claims to representativeness are made.

Meinhof and Richardson (1994) present articles which analyse how poverty is portrayed in a corpus of British media texts. (The book appears in a series which takes "a critical approach" to language, society and social change.) The texts, from newspapers and television, were sampled from ten days in 1991. This period was chosen in advance: that is, the sample was arbitrary or random, in the sense that the authors could not have known in advance what the data would contain. However, the editors (p.5) claim that it is a "representative sample". It clearly isn't, and indeed they point out themselves why it isn't: in these ten days, there was no "central trigger event which would have put poverty on the national agenda" (p.4). That is, had there been some such event (perhaps a government report; or an elderly person, living alone, found dead by neighbours), then the reporting would have been different. In fact, say (p.5) that they were "more interested in the everyday, mundane coverage of poverty", and therefore imply that they would have rejected the data if it had - by chance - included such a trigger event. At any rate, their sample is arguably random, but does not represent the range of variation one might expect in media coverage of poverty.

With reference to questions 9 and 10, there are studies which look historically and comparatively at relatively large data sets. Examples include van Noppen (1996) on a large corpus of Methodist discourse from the 1700s, Ehlich (1989) on fascist discourse in Germany, and Wodak (1996) on racist discourse in Austria. The question still arises, however, of the sense in which the data fragments cited in individual articles illustrate or represent the larger corpus.

An additional problem of data presentation arises with some work which is done on translated texts. One view might be that presenting data only in translation is an extreme form of decontextualization, which means that readers who have no access to the original language must put up with a severe loss of information. For example, Wodak (1996: 111) cites the phrase, in English only, *hostility to foreigners*. But this notion happens not to be lexicalized in

this way in English. The phrase is obviously a translation of one of two common German compound words: *Fremdenhass* or *Ausländerfeindlichkeit*. On the other hand, if analysis is in fact possible using only translated texts, then this implies that fine details of the text are, after all, not relevant to ideological analysis. Compare the problem of Whorf arguing that Hopi grammar embodies a world-view, but then explaining perfectly clearly - in English - what this world-view is. Again the conclusion seems to be that CDA is unclear about which features of language use (words? discourse structure? repetition?) have an effect on habitual thought.

Questions about language and ideology are of course asked not only within CDA, and much work needs to be done to locate CDA within a broad tradition of work on the social construction of reality. So my final main question is:

Q11. How does CDA relate to other constructivist theories of language and cognition?

There really are so many parallels between CDA and other work, that it is difficult to know where to start a list. For example, Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 259) talk of the "widespread cynicism about the rhetoric of commodity advertising". This theme, taken up in several text analyses elsewhere in Fairclough's work, is very reminiscent of the moral crusade against the vulgarizing mass media and increasingly mechanized and capitalist society which was carried out by F. R. Leavis and his colleagues in Scrutiny in the 1930s. The question arises as to how far CDA differs in methods and concepts from many types of literary criticism.

A large literature on stylistics debates whether interpretations of texts can be motivated from textual evidence. For example, Fish (1989) discusses the status of interpretations in literary theory and in the law. He shows the severe problems with formalist textual analyses, and argues that there are no unbiassed interpretative judgements: all interpretations are done with an eye on the intentions of the author, within historical, professional and institutional contexts. A well known concept of Fish's, very relevant to concerns of CDA, but hardly discussed there, is the interpretative community.

Given CDA's emphasis on features of language use which are taken-for-granted, routine and naturalized, it is surprising that there is no discussion of the concept of the routine grounds of everyday activity which lie behind conversational analysis. But then there is little reference in CDA to the whole phenomenological tradition of thought within sociology, to Alfred Schutz for example, or to Berger and Luckmann's (1966) classic on "the social construction of reality".

The view that the common-sense world is always a rhetorical construction is familiar to linguists via Benjamin Lee Whorf's work. But, here again, CDA ignores a large literature on modern views of the language-thought relation within this tradition, including meticulous reassessments of Whorf by Lucy (1992) and by Gumperz and Levinson (1996). Whorf posed a still unresolved question: do diverse languages influence the habitual thought of their speakers? CDA shifts this question to different patterns of use within a single language. And in this form, the question is very widely posed by a range of thinkers in apparently rather different intellectual traditions.

Perhaps Fairclough might point out that most linguists don't read Foucault, whom he does discuss, on how discursive practices define human subjects. But then, notoriously, Foucault does not discuss methods of text analysis. And, in turn, Fairclough does not discuss work,

explicitly inspired by Foucault, but with a much more concrete view of text analysis. For example, Said (1978) in his work on orientalism, studies a corpus of writings, to show textual traces of modes of thought. He cites repeated collocations of the word *oriental*, to show the presuppositions they convey. His detailed textual analyses make precise claims, which can be corroborated, and I have found in large corpora precisely some of the textual patterns which he identifies (Stubbs 1996a: 169).

There is much other work, with explicitly constructivist assumptions, which could be examined for its relevance to CDA. There is no reference to Searle's (1995) work on "the construction of social reality": a careful analysis of the relation between language acts and institutional facts. Nor is there discussion of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) on how metaphors, fixed phrases and cliches influence habitual thought. They make explicit claims (p.7) that "a systematic way of talking" about a topic can be "a portion of a conceptual network". And there is much feminist linguistics (e.g. Cameron 1992) which refers sympathetically to Whorf. Much of this huge body of work is not mentioned at all within CDA. Other work is referred to only fleetingly, and without any substantial evaluation of its relations to CDA. Indeed the whole tradition of "critical theory", in the sense of work by the Frankfurt School, is referred to only occasionally. Fowler (1996: 4) makes a brief reference, and Fairclough and Wodak (1997:260-61) provide brief summaries with no detailed explanation or direct comparison with CDA. Hammersley (1996) discusses this omission in detail.

Perhaps this is my main criticism. The position argued by CDA is not new at all. It has been debated since Plato and Aristotle. Plato was suspicious of the poets, and banished them from his Republic, lest they mislead people with their honeyed words. Aristotle also warned against the seductive appeal of rhetoric. The whole history of western thought could be written as this quarrel between philosophy and rhetoric: between the possibility of plain unvarnished truth and the insidious appeal of fine words; between the possibility of an independent truth and the inevitability of expressing things from a partisan point of view. Currently, we are in a phase in which the majority of social scientists believe in the impossibility of a neutral observation language, in which books such as Kuhn (1970) on paradigms of thought are among the most cited of all time, and in which a broad range of applied linguistic work has taken the "critical" ideological turn in tune with the postmodernist Zeitgeist (Brumfit 1996).

Given its own insistence on the positioning of the human subject by discourse, and on the inescapability of history (cf. Fowler 1991b: 93 on "discourse within history"), I find it surprising that CDA fails to examine in detail this broad historical tradition of thought. There are two ironies in CDA. First, it insists on interdisciplinary work, but underestimates just how widespread its central question has been across many disciplines and over many centuries. Second, it insists on the historical embedding of all language use, but does not recognise that it is posing the oldest question in philosophy.

My comments in this section draw heavily on Fish (1989: especially 436-67 and 471-502), who provides a magisterial discussion of the problems of critical theory and of the history of rhetoric.

Proposals

I am now very aware of the following features of my own presentation. Criticisms are inherently negative. I have argued that there are certain kinds of circularity from which CDA simply cannot escape. However, some of the questions I have asked can be answered with empirical methods, which could strengthen CDA in various ways. I have proposed several criteria which it is quite possible to meet, and which have indeed been met in published work. The main ones are:

- ethnographic study of actual text-production (e.g. Bell 1991)
- analysis of co-occurring linguistic features (e.g. Biber 1988, 1995)
- comparison of texts and corpora, including diachronic and cross-language corpora (e.g. Krishnamurty 1996, Stubbs 1997)
- study of text dissemination and audience reception (e.g. Zipes 1993, van Noppen 1996).

In addition to studies of production and reception, the text analyses must, quite simply, be much more detailed. Analyses must be comparative: individual texts must be compared with each other and with data from corpora. Analyses must not be restricted to isolated data fragments: a much wider range of data must be sampled before generalizations are made about typical language use. And a much wider range of linguistic features must be studied, since varieties of language use are defined, not by individual features, but by clusters of co-occurring features: this entails the use of quantitative and probabilistic methods of text and corpus analysis.

In a short paper, I cannot provide detailed analyses of text and corpus data. However, I can set out the form of the argument, provide references to published studies, and outline how they might be related. For example, I have myself published work (Stubbs 1994, 1996a: 125-56), in which I have tried to show how CDA could be improved by comparative analysis of grammatical features across two long texts (two complete school textbooks) and a million word corpus. These comparative and intertextual analyses could be evaluated against the criteria I have discussed, to see if I have done any better than the work I am criticizing.

I will outline two further case studies to show how individual texts could be compared with (1) other individual texts, against (2) an intertextual background of normative data from large historical and contemporary corpora. Such studies can also use socio-historical analysis of (3) the dissemination and reception of texts over time, and/or of (4) the discourse and beliefs of likely readers of the texts.

Case Study 1.

Here is an example of how the use of a keyword in a text relates to its intertextual background, and also to the political beliefs of intended readers.

A starting point, but no more, might be to comment on a text fragment, from an editorial in *Heritage Scotland* (1993: 10, 2), the magazine of the National Trust for Scotland. The title of the editorial, *Who Cares?*, is a play on words. The expression usually conveys extreme lack of interest. Here, the question is taken literally, and answered in the editorial. Here is the first paragraph (my emphasis added).

> "We regularly read newspaper headlines denouncing the 'moral sickness' within society. It is therefore important to all of us to know that there are caring organizations like the National Trust for Scotland, which not only preserves and protects buildings, landscape and inanimate objects, but also cares for the people and the communities at its properties."

The lexeme CARE has acquired political implications in contemporary British English, as in recurring phrases such as *health care, care in the community* and *caring society*. One might say, rather cynically, that such uses signal an uncaring society, conceived of mainly in economic terms. However, the only way to substantiate such rough observations is to use a corpus. In other work (Stubbs 1996a: 184; 1997), I have studied changes in the meaning and grammar of CARE, by looking at over 40,000 examples in large diachronic and contemporary corpora. Since around 1900, the noun care has undergone a change from predominantly personal uses (to take care of someone) to very frequent institutional uses (child care). The form caring occurs only from the 1960s as a pre-nominal adjective (a caring society, the caring professions). And the word carer appears only in the late 1970s. This is precisely the kind of changing discourse which CDA identifies, but does not document diachronically or quantitatively. (For an independent corpus study of CARE, see Johnson 1993).

CDA also emphasizes that changes in British English are part of much wider European or even global changes. Again, such claims could be documented only by corpus studies. In a smaller study (Stubbs 1997), I have investigated some of the changes in the German word PFLEGEN (= CARE) across several thousand examples from a German-language corpus, to show that it is also a keyword in contemporary German society (e.g. *Pflegeberufe* = caring professions).

Finally, as part of a study of how contemporary Scotland is represented in the media, especially in tourist advertising, McCrone et al (1995) analyse the membership of the National Trust for Scotland, the intended audience for the editorial text, its social class make-up and the political beliefs of its members, and also provide detailed examples of their discourse, collected in interviews about their views on the concept of "heritage".

Concretely, such a study could relate analyses of

- an individual text about "caring for the environment"
- recent changes in connotations of the word CARE in the UK
- wider, cross-language changes in this semantic field
- the target group of readers and their language.

Case Study 2.

A basic criterion is that work must be comparative. In a socially very influential case of the same story told from different ideological points of view, Zipes (1993) has published 38 English-language versions, from the 1600s to the present, of *Little Red Riding Hood*. He discusses the textual and social history of the story, including versions by Perrault (late 1600s) and the Brothers Grimm (early 1800s), which had huge circulations and a large influence in the education of children. He analyses the techniques and discursive strategies by which

violence is represented, both in the texts and in their accompanying illustrations, and also in the frequent intertextual references in contemporary advertising and films. In short, he discusses the adaptation, dissemination and reception of the most widespread and notorious fairy tale in the western world, with its themes of adolescence and obedience, and how it has been used to control gender roles and social norms. Such a case study illustrates in textual detail Foucault's (1980) theses on social control, sex and education.

A keyword in many of the versions is LITTLE. In other work (Stubbs 1995c, 1997), I have studied 300,000 occurrences of the adjectives LITTLE, SMALL, BIG and LARGE, to show that they occur in largely complementary distribution, and have quite different uses and collocates. In particular, LITTLE has strong cultural connotations. The following facts are very simple, but not explicitly presented in any dictionary I have found. In a 200-million word corpus of contemporary English, the most common noun to co-occur with LITTLE is GIRL. The phrase *little girl(s)* is nearly 20 times as common as *small girl(s)*, whereas the phrase *little boy(s)* is only twice as common as *small boy(s)*. The combination *little man* is almost always pejorative, as in *ridiculous little man*. Briefly, LITTLE frequently has strong connotative meanings of "cute and cuddly", or alternatively pejorative meanings. The combination of +female and +pejorative features is a well known phenomenon. (See Baker and Freebody 1989 for an independent analysis of the "cuddle" component of its meaning in a corpus of children's readers.) Such data provide a clear intertextual explanation of why the word LITTLE has the connotations it does in the phrase *Little Red Riding Hood* (also *Little Miss Muffet, Little Jack Horner*).

In summary, it would be possible to combine analyses of

- the historical development of different versions of a text
- its dissemination: publication history, sales, etc
- its use in social control and education
- its intertextual background (e.g. connotations of keywords).

CDA does not provide any criteria for selecting texts for analysis. Its methods do not distinguish between texts which have a restricted audience, and texts which have been adapted, read and retold uncountable times, learned by heart, and constantly alluded to over centuries. Tales such as *Little Red Riding Hood* have been studied in detail by many commentators, and Zipes is, of course, not working within CDA. A test for CDA would be: Can it add anything to such commentaries? Is it any advance on literary critical methods?

Conclusions

Such examples show that it is not unduly difficult to carry out studies which would meet at least some of the criteria I have proposed. Would it however be worthwhile? If you are interested in persuasion, in convincing people that ideas are often manipulated by uses of language, then you might feel that such studies, including analyses of millions of words of corpus data, are overkill. They seem to show in detail what is really rather obvious. However, although the facts about CARE and LITTLE may seem obvious in retrospect, they are discoverable only via work on large corpora, and are not open to unaided introspection. And, if you are interested in a systematic and thoroughly documented study of cultural transmission, reproduction and change, then such studies are necessary.

But in either case, you would have to recognise that the interpretations are ultimately circular. If you come to agree that CARE (as in *caring society*) is a weasel-word in contemporary Britain, or that *Little Red Riding Hood* is not the innocent tale you once thought it was, then these are not objective findings, but personal convictions. I happen to have been convinced of them, and it feels as though this was a free and rational choice. Both Fairclough (1995a: 231) and Fowler (1996: 4) see "emancipation" as "the founding motivation for critical analysis". (See also Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 259.) But Fish (1989: 467) reveals this as an illusion, and points out that:

> "It is because history is inescapable that every historical moment - that is, every moment - feels so much like an escape."

At the beginning of the article, I expressed the hope that my criticisms would be taken in a positive spirit. CDA has set an important agenda, of potentially very considerable social significance. It is therefore important that both the details, and also the central logic of the argument, are as carefully worked out as possible.

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