

Discourse and Knowledge

Theoretical and methodological aspects of a critical discourse and dispositive analysis*

Siegfried Jäger

Preliminary remarks

Central to a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) based on Michel Foucault's discourse theory are issues such as, *what knowledge (valid at a certain place at a certain time)* is at all, how the valid knowledge evolves, how it is passed on, which function it has for the constitution of subjects and the shaping of society* and which impact this knowledge has on the *overall development of society*.¹ Here 'knowledge' means all kinds of contents which make up a consciousness* and/or all kinds of meanings used by respective historical persons to interpret and shape the surrounding reality. People derive this 'knowledge'* from the respective discursive contexts into which they are born and are entangled with for their entire existence. Discourse analysis, extended to include dispositive analysis, aims to identify the *knowledge (valid at a certain place at a certain time) of discourses and/or dispositives**, to explore the respective concrete context of knowledge/power and to subject it to critique. Discourse analysis pertains to both everyday knowledge* that is conveyed via the media, everyday communication, school and family etc. and also to that particular knowledge (valid at a certain place at a certain time) which is produced by the various sciences. This applies both to the cultural and the natural sciences.

However, in this article I will focus on the knowledge of the cultural sciences.

Although transfers to the natural sciences would indeed be possible they are not considered here.

My contribution will begin with a *brief outline of the discourse-theoretical/methodological background to a Critical Discourse Analysis*.² Second, I will provide a sketch of what a *dispositive* is, i. e. discuss the interplay of discursive practices* (= speaking and thinking on the basis of knowledge), non-discursive practices* (= acting on the basis of knowledge) and 'manifestations' and/or 'materializations'* of knowledge (by acting/doing*). Indeed, dispositives can be conceived of as 'aggregate works of art'* which, being dovetailed and intervoven with one another in a variety of ways, constitute an all-encompassing societal dispositive*.

1. Discourse theory

The most fertile cultural sciences-oriented approach to a discourse analysis following Michel Foucault has been developed by the literature and cultural scientist, the 'Bochum-Dortmunder' Jürgen Link and his team. Their concern, as well as mine, is the analysis of current discourses* and the effects of their power, the illumination of the (language-based and iconographic) means by which they work* – in particular by collective symbolism* which contributes to the linking-up* of the various discourse strands*. The overriding concern of both our work is the function of discourses in the bourgeoisie-capitalist modern industrial society as techniques to legitimize and ensure government*.³

In his most compressed version Link defines discourse as: '... an institutionally consolidated concept of speech* inasmuch as it determines and consolidates action and thus already exercises power.'(Link, 1983: 60).

This definition of discourse can be further illustrated by regarding discourse 'as the flow of knowledge – and/or all societal knowledge stored – throughout all time'* (Jäger: 1993 and 1999), which determines individual and collective doing and/or formative action that shapes society*, thus exercising power. As such, discourses can be understood as sui generis material realities*.

At the same time, this implies that discourses are not interesting as mere expressions of social practice, but because they serve certain ends: i.e. to exercise power with all its effects*. They do this, because they are institutionalized and regulated, because they are linked to action.⁴

The (dominating) discourses can be criticized and problematized; this is done by analyzing them, by revealing their contradictions and non-expression and/or the spectrum of what can be said and what can be done* covered by them and by making the means evident through which the acceptance of merely temporarily valid truths* is to be achieved. Assumed truths are meant here, which are presented as being rational, sensible and beyond all doubt.

Any scientist conducting such an analysis must, moreover, see clearly that with his/her critique he/she is not situated outside the discourse he/she is analyzing. If not, he/she places his/her own concept of discourse analysis in doubt. Apart from other critical aspects which discourse analysis also comprises he/she can base his/her

analysis on values and norms, laws and rights; he/she must not forget either that these are themselves the historical outcome of discourse and that his/her possible bias is not based on truth, but represents a position that in turn is the result of a discursive process. Equipped with this position he/she is able to enter discursive contests* and defend or modify his/her position.

The above-mentioned context of linking discourse to power* is, however, very complex because: 'A discursive practice exercises power with all its effects in various respects. If a discursive formation* can be described as a limited 'positive' field of accumulations of utterances', as put forward by Link/Link-Heer to defend this connection, 'the opposite is true, that in this way possible other utterances, questions, points of view, problematic issues etc. are excluded. Such exclusions which necessarily result from the structure of a special discourse* (which in absolutely no way must be misinterpreted as the manipulative intentions of any one subject!), can be institutionally reinforced.' (Link/Link-Heer, 1990: 90). Thus, *power is also exercised over discourses*, for example in the form of easy access to the media, unlimited access to resources etc.

What Link/Link-Heer relate to scientific discourses also pertains in my opinion to the everyday discourse, the education discourse*, the political discourse* and the media and so on.

Discourse analysis encompasses *the respective spectrum of what can be said* in its qualitative range and its accumulation and/or all utterances which in a certain society at a certain time are said or can be said. It also covers the strategies with which the *spectrum of what can be said* is extended on the one hand, but also restricted on the other, for instance, by denial strategies*, relativizing strategies*, strategies to remove

taboos* etc.. Demonstration of the restrictions or lack of restrictions of the spectrum of what can be said is subsequently a further critical aspect of discourse analysis.

The emergence of such strategies points in turn to the fact that there are utterances which in a certain society at a certain point in time cannot yet, or can no more be said, unless special 'tricks' are used in order to express them without negative sanctions. The spectrum of what can be said can be restricted or the attempt can be made to exceed its limits via direct prohibitions and confinements, limits, implications, creation of explicit taboos but also through conventions, internalizations, regulation of consciousness. Discourse as a whole is a regulating body; it forms consciousness.

By functioning as the 'flow of 'knowledge' – and/or all societal knowledge stored – throughout all time' discourse creates the conditions for the formation of subjects and the structuring and shaping of societies.

The various discourses are intertwined or entangled with one another like vines or strands; moreover they are not static but in constant motion forming a 'discursive milling mass'* which at the same time results in the 'constant rampant growth of discourses'*. It is this mass that discourse analysis endeavours to untangle.

An important means to link up discourses with one another is collective symbolism. Collective symbols are '*cultural stereotypes* (frequently called '*topoi*'), which are handed down and used *collectively**.' (Drews/Gerhard/Link, 1985: 265)

With all the collective symbols stored that all the members of a society know, the repertoire of images is available with which we envisualize a complete picture of

societal reality and/or the political landscape of society, with which we furthermore interpret these and are provided with interpretations – in particular by the media.⁵

The most important rules regulating these links with which the image of such a societal or political context is produced are catachreses or image fractures*. These function by creating connections between utterances and areas of experience, bridging contradictions, generating plausibilities and acceptances etc. and reinforcing the power of discourses. For example: 'The locomotive of progress can be slowed down by floods of immigrants.' This is a so-called image fracture (catachresis) because the symbols locomotive (meaning progress) and floods (meaning a threat from outside) are derived from different origins of images, the first being taken from traffic and the second from nature. The analysis of collective symbolism including catachreses is consequently a further critical aspect of discourse analysis.

On the question of the power of discourses Foucault once said:

'It is the problem which determines nearly all my books: how in occidental societies is the production of discourses, which (at least for a certain time) are equipped with a truth value*, linked to different power mechanisms and institutions*?' (Foucault, 1983: 8)

To further illustrate the problem of power/knowledge it is necessary for me to first deal in more detail with the relationship between discourse and societal reality* and second, to ask more precisely how power is anchored in this societal reality, who exercises it, over whom and by what means it is exercised etc..

It should be clear by now that in the discourses reality is *not* simply *reflected* but that discourses live a 'life of their own' in relation to reality, although they impact and shape and even enable societal reality. They are in themselves sui generis material realities. They are not, for instance, by character passive media of 'in-formation' (i.e. information and 'formative input') provided by reality and not second-class material realities, nor are they 'less material' than the 'real' reality. Discourses are rather fully valid first-class material realities amidst others. (Link, 1992)

This also means that discourses determine reality, always of course via intervening active subjects in their societal contexts as (co-)producers and (co-)agents of discourses and changes to reality. These active subjects conduct discursive and non-discursive practices. They can do this because as subjects 'knitted into' the discourses they have knowledge at their disposal.

Following this notion the discourse cannot be reduced to a mere 'distorted view of reality' or a 'necessarily false ideology' – as frequently done by the concept of 'ideology critique' following orthodox Marxist approaches. In fact, the discourse represents a reality of its own which in relation to 'the real reality' is in no way 'much ado about nothing', distortion and lies but has a material reality of its own and 'feeds on' past and (other) current discourses.

This characterization of discourses as being material means at the same time that discourse theory is strictly a materialistic theory. Discourses can also be regarded as societal means of production. Thus they are in no way 'merely ideology', they produce subjects and – conveyed by these in terms of the 'population' – they produce societal realities.⁶

Subsequently, discourse analysis is not (only) about interpretations of something that already exists, thus not (only) about the analysis of the allocation of a meaning post festum, but about the analysis of the production of reality which is performed by discourse – conveyed by active people.

Yet, the simple question is: who *makes* the discourses, what status do they have?

The individual does not make the discourse, vice versa tends to be the case. The discourse is super-individual. Though everybody 'knits along' at producing discourse, no individual and no single group determines the discourse or has precisely intended what turns out to be the final result. As a rule discourses have evolved and become independent as the result of historical processes. They convey more knowledge than the individual subjects are aware of. Thus, if one wants to identify the knowledge of a society (e.g. on certain topics) one has to reconstruct the history of its evolution or genesis. Foucault has attempted several experiments on this, not only with a view to the sciences, because he always included their 'surroundings', the institutions, everyday life (e.g. in prison, in hospital).

Such an approach might well go against the grain for people who have the uniqueness of the individual in view. It also has to be considered that it is not so easy to follow the thoughts presented here because we have learnt that language as such does not change reality – which is in fact correct. Moreover, in opposition to notions which idealize language or even notions based on the magic of language that changes reality, we perhaps tend to allocate too strongly the idea of the material reality of the discourse to idealistic concepts. If however, we regard human speech

(and human activity in general) as activity in the broader frame of societal activity, being tied in with the historical discourse according to whose impact societies organize their practice, and regard societal reality as having emerged and emerging in connection with the 'raw material' of reality (matter*), the notion ought to be grasped easier that discourses exercise power as power is exercised by the impact of tools and objects on reality. This impact can immediately be characterized as a non-discursive practice.

1.1. Discourse, knowledge, power, society, subject

As '*agents of knowledge (valid at a certain place at a certain time*)*' discourses exercise power. They are themselves a power factor by being apt to induce behaviour and (other) discourses. Thus, they contribute to the structuring of the power relations in a society.

Yet, what is the role played in this discursive interplay by the individual or subject? In this respect Foucault argues quite clearly: 'One has to liberate oneself from the constituting subject, from the subject itself, i.e. to arrive at an historical analysis which is capable of clarifying the constitution of the subject in the historical context. It is precisely this that I would call genealogy, i.e. a form of history which reports on the constitution of knowledge, discourses, fields of objects* etc. without having to relate to a subject which transcends the field of events and occupies it with its hollow identity throughout history.' (Foucault, 1978 b, 32)

In contrast to what Foucault is frequently criticized for, he, or rather his discourse theory, does not deny the subject. He endeavours to arrive at an historical analysis

which is capable of clarifying the constitution of the subject in the historical context, in the socio-historical context and thus from a synchronic* and diachronic* perspective. This is not directed against the subject but against subjectivism and individualism.

The acting individual is absolutely involved when we talk about the realization of power relations (practice). It thinks, plans, constructs, interacts and fabricates. As such it also faces the problem of having to prevail, i.e. to get its own way, to find its place in society. However, it does this in the frame of the rampant growth of the network of discursive relations and arguments, in the context of 'living discourses' insofar as it brings them to life, lives 'knitted into' them and contributes to their change.

The spectrum of all that can be said and the forms in which it emerges is covered by discourse analysis *in its entire qualitative range*, so that discourse analysis can make generally valid statements on one or several discourse strands.⁷ However, *quantitative aspects* also emerge since statements about accumulations and trends are also possible. These can be of importance when identifying, for example, thematic foci within a discourse strand.

I will summarize this first part in an hypothesis:

Discourses exercise power as they transport knowledge on which the collective and individual consciousness feeds. This emerging knowledge is the basis of individual and collective action and the formative action that shapes reality.

2. From the discourse to the dispositive

Since knowledge is the basis of action and formative action that shapes reality, the opportunity arises not only to analyze discursive practices, but also non-discursive practices and so-called manifestations/materializations as well as the relationship between these elements. The interplay of these elements I call, as does Foucault, *dispositive*. To explain this interplay more precisely I have to go into it in more depth.

As people – *as actual individuals* – we allocate meaning to reality in the present, in history and in the future for which we plan. Thus, we create *reality* in a certain way – both for the good and for the bad. Here, of course, the world of natural things, the material side of reality, is not meant. The material side of reality only represents the raw material which is put to use by the active individual and which – frequently irrespective of societal reality – is researched by the natural sciences. For instance, even medical science regards people as if they were biological natural objects.

It is not reality that is reflected in consciousness, but consciousness that relates to reality as the discourses provide the application concepts* and all the knowledge for the shaping of reality as well as further reality concepts*: if the discourse withdraws from the reality 'on whose shoulders' it has been formed, or rather more precisely, if people for whatever reasons withdraw from a discourse which they have provided with a meaning, that part of reality which corresponds to it becomes meaning/less in the truest sense of the word and returns to its natural state.

If the knowledge contained in a discourse changes, other meanings are allocated to it and it becomes another object. This happens, for example, when a beggar uses a bank which has become meaningless – its intended function having been removed -

as a weekend house, or when a steel works or nuclear power station are converted into a leisure park. Here a withdrawal of meaning takes place. The well-trodden 'floor of meaning' is withdrawn from beneath the feet of the object in question and/or modified by allocating one or several other meanings to it.

In Foucault's 'Archäologie des Wissens' ('Archaeology of Knowledge') he writes that discourses '... are to be treated as practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1989: 74). Notwithstanding, Foucault also sees *non-discursive* societal practices which play a part in forming objects/manifestations. At the same time he stresses the importance of discursive 'relationships'. He guesses they are '... somehow at the edge of the discourse: they provide it (= the discourse, S.J.) with the objects about which it (= the discourse, S.J.) can talk, or rather ... they (= the discursive relationships, S.J.) determine the package of relations which the discourse must induce in order to be able to speak of these or those objects, to treat them, to give them names, to analyze, to classify and explain them' (1988: 70). Thus, Foucault encircles the problem of the relationship between discourse and reality without solving it beyond doubt. It remains unclear what he actually understands to be 'objects'. One can only guess that 'manifestations' are not meant, but rather themes, theories, statements, in other words purely discursive 'objects'.

This circumnavigation of the problem is at its best in my opinion in his attempt to determine what he understands by 'dispositive'. In the collection of interviews and lectures 'Dispositive der Macht' ('Dispositives of Power') (Foucault, 1978a) he first defines dispositive somewhat daringly as follows:

'What I am endeavouring to establish with this terminology (namely dispositive, S.J.) is first a decisively heterogeneous ensemble which covers discourses, institutions, architectural institutions, regulated decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral or philanthropic teachings, in brief, what is said and what is not said. So much for the elements of the dispositive. The dispositive itself is the net which can be woven between these elements.' (ibid.: 119f). Foucault goes on to differentiate: '... Between these elements there is, whether discursive or not, a play of changing positions and functions which in turn can be very varied.' (ibid.: 120). He understands '... by dispositive a kind of – say – formation whose major function at a given historical point in time was to respond to an urgency* (original French: *urgence*; I. B. / R. T.). The dispositive, therefore, has a mainly strategic function" (ibid.). Having differentiated between discursive and non-discursive in the above-cited initial definition a few pages further on he continues to say:

'... In view of what I want with the dispositive it is of hardly any importance to say: this is discursive and that is not.' (Foucault, 1978a: 125)

Foucault is in an embarrassing situation here. The three psychoanalysts with whom he is discussing have pushed him into a tight corner. It is noticeable that his interview partners are getting on his nerves. He is becoming impatient, even cross.

This can be felt even clearer, when he proceeds: 'Compare, for example, the architectural plan of the Ecole Militaire by Gabriel with the actual Ecole Militaire building: what is discursive, what is institutional? All that interests me is whether the building corresponds to the plan. However, I do not believe that it would be of great

importance to undertake this division because my problem is not a linguistic one.' (ibid.: 125).

Foucault liberates himself - and us - from linguistics that are not based on thought and consciousness; he subordinates language and therefore also linguistics to thought and basically makes them into a department of the cultural sciences whose objects are the conditions and results of sensory human activity* - sensory because thought and consciousness are the preconditions of human activity.

After his archaeological endeavours to reconstruct the development of knowledge entirely materialistically, Foucault arrived at the conviction that it is not speech / the text / the discourse alone which moves the world and he found or rather installed the dispositive in order to interpret his historical and current reality more appropriately. With this determination of dispositive, the question has to be asked intensively as to the connection between discourse and dispositive and/or discourse and reality.

Foucault *clearly sees a co-existence* of discourse and reality and/or objects; they are the elements of the dispositive which is the net hung up between these elements and/or links them. Foucault is, however, not able to say *in which quite concrete* relationship and/or, to put it more pointedly, *in which empirical relationship* discourses and things and/or events / reality are linked to one another. He was indeed interested in the 'nature of the connection', '... which can be produced between these heterogeneous elements.' He sees between these elements '... whether discursive or not, a play of changing positions and functions, which' – as he says – '... in themselves can in turn be very varied.' (1978a: 120). Furthermore, he sees the dispositive as a kind of 'formation whose major function it has been at a given

historical point in time to respond to an urgency (original French: *urgence*; I. B. / R. T.).' He also recognizes that therefore the dispositive has 'a primarily strategic function.' (ibid.) Such an urgency could, for instance, exist in the re-absorbing of a liberated social mass which inevitably had to be a problem for a capitalist society, etc.

Foucault wishes to show '... that what I call dispositive is a far more general case of episteme*. Or rather, that the episteme in contrast to the dispositive in general, which itself is discursive and non-discursive and whose elements are a lot more heterogeneous, is a specifically discursive dispositive.' (ibid.: 123). In this respect we are not only dealing with spoken and written *knowledge (episteme)* but also with the entire knowledge apparatus with which a goal is achieved. Accordingly epistemes are not only the discursive part in the knowledge apparatus, but knowledge also 'lives' and 'acts' in the actions of people and in the objects they produce based on knowledge. What is meant here exactly is well illustrated in 'Überwachen und Strafen' ('Discipline and Punish'), which I merely mention here (Foucault, 1989).

Yet, here the following becomes evident: Foucault assumes a *dualism* of discourse and reality. Foucault did not see that the discourses and the world of objectivities and/or realities are substantially interrelated and do not exist independently. In the dispositive various elements are assembled which are linked to one another, as he says, and this connection constitutes the dispositive. (See also Deleuze, 1992 and Balke, 1998)

Evidently Foucault sees the emergence of dispositives as follows: an urgency emerges and *an existing dispositive becomes precarious*; for this reason a need to act results and the social and hegemonial forces which are confronted with it

assemble the elements which they can obtain in order to encounter this urgency, i.e. speech, people, knives, cannons, institutions etc. in order to mend the 'leaks' – the urgency – which has arisen, as Deleuze says. (Deleuze, 1992 and Balke, 1998)

What connects these elements is quite simply that they serve a common end, which is to fend off the momentary or permanent urgency. An 'inner bond' – of whatever kind – which would tie them together does not, however, become evident in Foucault's understanding of dispositive.

Yet, this bond exists in the form of sensory human activity which mediates between subject and object, the social worlds and realities of objects, in other words, through non-discursive practices, which at least in Foucault's definition of dispositive do not explicitly come about. By relating back to sensory activity I am introducing the theoretical base of my second line of argument, i.e. the activity theory based on Marx and developed by Wygotzki and especially A. N. Leontjew, the nucleus of which due to its importance in this context, I would like to illustrate.⁸ However, it is also necessary to place this approach, which is in essence an ideology-critical one, on a discourse-theoretical foundation.

As already said, we as people are evidently capable of allocating meanings to 'things', in other words of giving reality a meaning; moreover, only by giving things meanings do we make them into things. I can, for example, allocate the meaning *table* to a piece of wood that I find in the forest and then eat my bread from it and put my mug on it. A thing to which I allocate no meaning is not a thing to me; indeed it is completely non-descript to me, invisible or even non-existent; I do not even see it, because I overlook it. I do not see the bird that the forester sees (forester syndrome).

Perhaps I see a red spot. And what do I say about it when I see it: that is a red spot. And, in fact, to me that is the meaning of the red spot to which I can allocate the meaning red spot. Whether it is a flower, a bird or the recently dyed hair of Lothar Matthäus who is going for a walk in the woods, because he was injured playing in the last football match and therefore cannot train today, is not visible to me, is not there, is beyond my range. Of course, a friend can say to me, look, that is Lothar Matthäus' hair, and he used to be captain of the German national team. Then I can say: yes, okay, I know him; or else: no, that was definitely a bird or a flower.

What I want to say by this is: all meaningful reality is existent for us because we *make* it meaningful⁹ or because it has been allocated with meaning by our ancestors or neighbours and is still important to us. It is like King Midas with his gold: everything he touched turned to gold. Thus, everything to which we allocate meaning is real to us in a certain way, because, when and how it is meaningful to us.

Ernesto Laclau expressed this context elegantly when he wrote: 'By 'the discursive' I understand nothing which in a narrow sense relates to texts but the ensemble of phenomena of the societal production of meaning on which a society as such is based. It is not a question of regarding the discursive as a plane or dimension of the social but as having the same meaning as the social as such Subsequently, the non-discursive is not opposite to the discursive as if one were dealing with two different planes because there is nothing societal that is determined outside the discursive. History and society are therefore an unfinished text.' (Laclau, 1981: 176).

One has to ask, however, why, when, under what conditions and how do I allocate which meaning to 'things', in other words, how is the 'gap' between discourse and

reality closed. With Leontjew's activity theory this happens when I derive a motive from a particular need and subsequently endeavour to achieve a certain aim for which one uses actions, operations and raw material, in other words, by working. The products thus created can be utility commodities but also new thoughts and plans from which in turn new sensory activities can result with new products etc. etc. The *psychologist* Foucault oddly did not know the activity theory based on materialistic psychology of the early thirties, or possibly he rejected it for appearing to him to be too subject-based. Yet, this approach is interesting because the theory enables discussion of the mediation between subject and object, society and objective reality by sensory activity. He overlooked the fact, that the consequences and/or the 'materializations through work' of past speech and/or preceding discourses also belong to reality as they are materializations of thought complexes. These have been implemented by people acting in their non-discursive practices by which means they have erected and furnished houses and banks and made benches, which incidentally – as demonstrated – only exist for as long as they are and remain embedded in discourses. The institution bank, for example, which belongs to the dispositive capital, stops having this function when it no longer has a discursive base to stand on: it becomes *meaningless*, reduced to nothing apart from purely 'natural' matter (the latter itself becoming meaningful of course, if we call it thus), or '*discursified anew*'* into another objectivity having been allocated a new meaning. Then the bank is, for instance, lived in by beggars who make it into their asylum.¹⁰

Foucault also sees this and writes: 'It is not objects which remain constant, not the area which they form, neither is it the point of their emergence or the way in which they are characterized, but it is the creation of the interrelations of the surfaces where they appear, distinguish themselves from each other, where they are analyzed and

can be specified.' (1988: 71). To put it in a nutshell: If the discourse changes, the object not only changes its meaning, but it becomes a different object, it loses its hitherto identity.

This can either take place as a fracture or as a long, extended process in which, mostly unnoticed, yet, in effect completely, everything changes.

Foucault is extremely reluctant, as he says, '... to define objects without a relationship to the basis of the things.' (ibid.: 72) A little further on he says, it is his concern that the discourses are '... to be treated as practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak.' (ibid.: 74).

However, he does not manage to proceed beyond this point, because in my opinion he does not understand the mediation between subject and object, society and discourse as being brought about by work/activity and/or non-discursive practices. The discursive practices remain verbal for him, strictly separated from the non-discursive practices and he adheres to the separation between intellectual activity and (un-intellectual?) physical work. In this respect he is in fact a child of his times or his origin, in which the bourgeoisie regarded physical work as completely un-intellectual. He knows, that signs serve *more* than to signify things and he sees: '... this *more* makes them irreducible to speech and language.' (Foucault, 1988: 74) He would also like to illustrate and describe this *more* (ibid.), at which, in my opinion, he does not succeed. He cannot really grasp this *more*. In my opinion, this *more* is the *knowledge* which serves the conversion of knowledge of any kind - and of knowledge which still has to be articulated - into objects: knowledge about statics, for example, or about the nature of material, tools, routine knowledge, which flows into any work

as 'numb intellectual actions', but which is not or only seldom articulated and in many cases even impossible to articulate. Consider, for example, the knowledge of a steel-worker at the blast furnace who sees when the steel is ready or which ingredients are still missing, but cannot say why this is the case. In a certain way, what we have here is knowledge that has become independent, a routine.

Thus, one could say: reality is meaningful and exists in the form in which it exists only as long as the people, all of whom are bound up or 'knitted into' the (socio-historic) discourses and who are constituted by them, have allocated and will continue to allocate meaning to it. Should the latter no longer be the case, the objects change, or lose their meaning. At best the original meaning can be reconstructed as the former meaning, which has become entangled with other meanings or which has finished to exist. Even when one observes the night sky and sees in the constellation of stars certain signs of the zodiac, this is the result of a discourse. One only sees signs of the zodiac, *because* one has learnt to see them and possibly to guess that somewhere there is a god or there is not.

The allocation of meaning* is, however, not an unbinding symbolic action, but means the revival of what one comes across, re-shaping and change. If, under these conditions we consider the collective symbolism that is popularly used when talking of immigrants, we will realize: *many people who have learnt to carry out corresponding allocations of meaning, really feel that foreigners are floods, which have to be held back or against which dams have to be erected, or they are even felt to be lice and pigs, which one can crush or slaughter.*

Bernhard Waldenfels (Waldenfels, 1991) confirms at several points the criticism of Foucault, outlined above, by whom he himself, was inspired, when he writes: It '... is

unclear how the border between discursive and non-discursive practices is drawn and how it is bridged (by Foucault, S. J.), it remains unclear whether it has to be drawn at all. I believe that in a certain way Foucault had manoeuvred himself into a blind alley by conceiving the formation of the order of history in his theory first as the orders of knowledge (epistemes), then as orders of speech (discourse) instead of starting with an order which is divided up into the different behavioural registers of people, e.g. their speech and action (!), but also their views, their physical customs, their erotic relationships, their techniques, their economic and political decisions, their artistic and religious forms of expression and a good deal more. One cannot see why *any one* such area should be spared the functionality which Foucault developed one-sidedly on the base of speech.' (Waldenfels, 1991: 291) In addition Waldenfels remarks that Foucault even exceeded these limits at several points and continues: '... in the 'Archäologie des Wissens' ('Archaeology of Knowledge') the discourse is mentioned that deals with forms and expressions of politics, such as the function of the revolutionary instance which can neither be traced back to a revolutionary situation nor to a revolutionary consciousness. ... Here, too, Foucault preferred to experiment ...' (ibid.: 291f.)

This ought to encourage us to experiment further and, equipped with Foucault's 'box of tools', in which theoretical and practical instruments are to be found, to think some of his ideas further or to bring them to a conclusion. This I have endeavoured to do in this text. First, by repositioning Foucault's definition of discourse which is too strongly caught up in the verbal, which is also not substituted by that of the dispositive but is incorporated by it and I have taken it back a step to the place at which human thought and knowledge are situated, i.e. the consciousness. This is where the contents of thought (including affects, ways of seeing etc.) are situated which provide

the base for the shaping of reality by work. By so doing I have, second, made the activity theory fertile for discursive theory, the former theory being the one which indicates how the subjects and objects of reality are mediated with each other. Foucault saw the discourse primarily being *somehow* mediated with reality, and thus occasionally approaches the proximity of the thoughts of constructivism. By discussing Leontjew I have been able to determine the subject as the link which connects discourses with reality. Subjects do this in the sum of their activities which in the way they actually take effect are neither planned by a single individual nor a group. It is, however, human consciousness and physical being (physical strength) which in this respect takes effect and shapes reality. Everything that is human consciousness is constituted discursively, i.e. through knowledge. It is also the subjects, incidentally, which bring the knowledge into play that has become independent, a routine. This knowledge, too, is handed down in the discursive and non-discursive practices and manifestations and is in principle reconstructable, re-accessible.

The problem I have touched upon in this discussion I will now endeavour to summarize and bring to the point: I have the impression, that the difficulties with the determination of the dispositive are connected to the lack of determination of the mediation between discourse (what is said / what has been said), non-discursive practices (activities) and manifestations (products / objects). If I, as do Leontjew and others, regard these manifestations as materializations / activities of knowledge (discourse) and the non-discursive practices as the active implementation of knowledge, the context can be produced that will probably solve a lot of problems.

The sociologist Hannelore Bublitz provides a detailed discussion of this problem in her recent book on 'Foucaults Archäologie des Unbewussten' ('Foucault's Archaeology of the Unconscious') (Bublitz, 1999: 82 – 115), in which she in particular also underlines the function of the dispositive nets for the modern subject formation. She claims: 'Although, therefore, Foucault on the one hand sees the non-discursive and the discursive as opposites he advocates the thesis that, 'what is done and what is said are not opposite'.' (Foucault, 1976: 118) Rather he assumes '... that the entire 'civilized' occidental society appears as the 'complex net of various elements – walls, space, institutions, regulations, discourses', as a 'factory for the production of suppressed subjects'.' (Bublitz, 1999: 90)

To conclude, the question that still has to be answered is whether and how discourses and dispositives can be analysed at all.

3. The method of discourse and dispositive analysis

The above-outlined theoretical discussion of discourse and dispositive theory also form the general theoretical foundation of the analytical method proposed in the following. This also draws on linguistic instruments (figurativeness, vocabulary, pronominal structure, argumentation types etc.) with whose aid we can investigate the more discrete means that take effect in texts as elements of discourses.

However, I will do without a detailed presentation of the (strictly) linguistic instrumentarium since one can derive it cautiously and selectively from good works on style and grammar.¹¹

The linguistic instrumentarium represents at the same time merely one 'drawer' to be found in the discourse-analytical 'box of tools' which can be filled up with very varied instruments according to the texture of the object to be investigated. Yet, there is a standard repertoire which I will go on to describe in the course of this article. Moreover, in the following emphasis will be placed on activity and discourse theoretical principles.

3.1 The structure of discourse

Discourses and/or 'societal flows of knowledge through time'^{*} represent in their entirety a gigantic and complex 'milling mass'.

To begin, the question therefore arises, as to how discourses can be analyzed at all in spite of their constant rampant growth and interwoven nature. In order to do this, I will first make some terminologically pragmatic suggestions that are apt to render the principle *structure of discourses* transparent and only as a result of which they can actually be analyzed.

*Special discourses and inter-discourses**

Fundamentally, *special discourses* (of (the) science(s)) are to be distinguished from *inter-discourse*, whereby all non-scientific discourses are to be regarded as components of the inter-discourse. At the same time, elements of the scientific discourses (special discourses) constantly flow into the inter-discourses.

To identify the structure of discourses I suggest the following operationalization aids.

Discourse strands

In the general societal discourse a great variety of *themes* arise. *Thematically uniform discourse processes** I call *discourse strands*.

Each discourse strand has a synchronic and diachronic dimension. A synchronic cut through a discourse strand has a certain qualitative (finite) range.¹² Such a cut is made in order to identify what has been 'said' and/or what is, was and will be 'sayable' at a particular past, present or future point in time, in other words, in a respective 'present time' in its entire range.

*Discourse fragments**

Each discourse strand comprises a multitude of elements which are traditionally called texts. I prefer the term discourse fragment to that of text since texts (can) address several themes and thus contain several *discourse fragments*. What I call a *discourse fragment* is therefore a text or part of a text which deals with a certain *theme*, e.g. foreigners / foreigners' affairs (in the broadest sense). Vice versa, this means that discourse fragments join up to constitute discourse strands.

*Entanglements of discourse strands**

It has to be considered, then, that a *text* can make references to various discourse strands and in fact usually does, in other words: in a text various discourse fragments can be contained; these emerge in general *in an entangled form*. Such a *discursive*

entanglement (of strands) exists when a text clearly addresses various *themes*, but also when a main theme is addressed in which, however, references to other themes are made. Such is the case with a commentary which deals with two themes that have or appear to have nothing to do with one another. In this case there are two different discourse fragments which are, however, entangled with one another. On the other hand, though, a thematically uniform text (= discourse fragment) can make more or less lose references to other themes and *tie* the treated theme to one or several others at the same time. This is, for instance, the case when in a text on the theme immigration reference is made to the economic discourse strand or the discourse on women etc. Thus a corresponding commentary could, for example, conclude: '... and integration costs money, by the way' or: 'one also has to consider that with the people from that country the patriarchy plays a completely different role than with us.' In these instances one can speak of *discursive knots**, the discourse strands forming loose knots. Such 'occasional knots' as opposed to constantly entangled strands can therefore be seen as a light form of entanglement.

Discursive events and discursive context*

All events have discursive roots; in other words, they can be traced back to discursive constellations whose materializations they represent. However, only those events can be seen as discursive events, which are especially emphasized politically, i.e. as a general rule by the media and as such events they influence the direction and quality of the discourse strand to which they belong to a more or less strong degree. To give an example: the grave consequences of the nuclear MCA (maximum credible accident) in Harrisbourg can be compared with those in Tschernobyl. Whereas, however, the former was kept secret by the media for years, the latter was

made into a media-discursive mega-event* having an impact on politics in the entire world. Whether an event, for instance an anticipated serious accident in the chemical industry becomes a discursive event or not, depends on the respective political power constellation and developments. Discourse analysis can establish whether such anticipated events will become discursive events or not. If they do, they influence the further discourse considerably: Tschernobyl contributed in Germany to a changing nuclear policy, which – albeit hesitantly – will lead to her withdrawing from nuclear power. An opposing environmental ('green') discourse* which had been developing for some time, would hardly have been capable of achieving this goal. It can be observed at the same time that a discursive event, such as the one just described, can impact on the entire discourse on new technologies by re-directing attention, for instance, to the necessity of developing new energy sources.

Another example: the electoral success of the FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria) in 1999 met with considerable media coverage. As a result, and with the FPÖ (and indirectly Jörg Haider) becoming part of the government, the situation triggered a far greater worldwide response, thus becoming a discursive mega-event, which for months kept the European and US press in suspense. Here again an impact on other discourses could be observed: on discourses of the extreme right-wing in other European and non-European countries.

The identification of discursive events can also be important for the analysis of discourse strands, because sketching them marks out the contours of the *discursive context* to which a current discourse strand relates. In this way the analysis of a synchronic cut through a discourse strand can, for example, find its historic roots by referring this synchronic cut back to a chronology of the discursive events that

thematically belong to the discourse strand at stake. Such historic references are particularly helpful to the analysis and interpretation of current cuts through discourse strands.¹³

*Discourse planes**

The respective discourse strands operate on *various discursive planes* (science(s), politics, media, education, everyday life, business life, administration etc). Such *discourse planes* could also be called the *societal locations** from which is 'spoken'. It can also be observed, that these discursive planes impact on one another, relate to one another, use each other etc. In this way, for example, discourse fragments of a special discourse of science or the political discourse can be included on the media plane. We can also observe further, that the media can include the everyday discourse, package it, focus it etc. and also, particularly, in the mass-circulation yellow press à la Bild (Germany) or Kronenzeitung (Austria) sensationalize and 'doll it up' in a populist form. In this way, incidentally, the media regulate everyday thinking and exercise considerable influence on what is conductible and conducted politics. Consider, for example, the image of Jörg Haider, which, without the kind of media reporting that normalizes right-wing populism, would hardly have come about.

We also have to pay attention to the fact that the individual discourse planes are so tightly interwoven that, for example, even media that are renowned for having a leading role take on information and contents of any kind, that have already popped up in other media. This adds to the justification of speaking of *the media discourse**, which as a whole, but specifically concerning the dominant media in society, can

essentially be regarded as uniform. It does not rule out though, that various *discourse positions* can achieve different degrees of impact, from strong to weak.

*Discourse position**

The category of the *discourse position* with which a specific ideological location of a person or a medium is meant, proves to be very helpful. Margret Jäger defines the category of the discourse position as follows: 'With discourse position I understand the (ideological, S.J.) location from which the participation in the discourse and assessment of it for individuals and/or groups and institutions result. It produces and reproduces the special discursive entanglements*, which feed on the hitherto experienced and current life situation of those involved in the discourse. Thus, the discourse position is the result of the involvement in, of being 'knitted into' various discourses to which the individual has been subjected and which it has processed into a certain ideological position during the course of its life.' (M. Jäger, 1996: 47).

What applies to the subject correspondingly applies to the media and indeed to entire discourse strands. They, too, form certain discourse positions, which shape overall reporting with varying degrees of stringency. Attention has to be paid to the fact that: '... groups and individuals can assess this discourse system* in a variety of ways. For instance, the hegemonial discourse can occupy the symbol of an aeroplane in a positive way, whereas the anti-hegemonial discourse rejects aeroplanes and idealizes trees, bicycles etc. What is important in this respect is, however, that deviating discourse positions relate to 'the same discursive basic structure (Link, 1986a).' (M. Jäger, 1996: 47)

Such discourse positions can basically only be revealed as the result of discourse analyses. Though, it can be observed that they belong to the general knowledge of a population in a rough form. The self-descriptions of newspapers, for example, as 'independent' or 'non-partisan' should always be regarded with distrust. At the same time, it should be indicated that discourse positions *within* a dominant or hegemonial discourse are rather homogeneous, which can in turn be regarded as the effect of the respective hegemonial discourse. Within the paramount discourse there can of course be various positions which, however, can agree in principle about not putting in doubt the ruling economic system. Discourse positions which deviate can frequently be allocated to more or less stringent opposing discourses. This does not rule out that opposing discursive and fundamentally oppositional discourse elements can be subversively introduced into the hegemonial discourse. An example of this would be the popular manner of speech 'time is money', which might well be understood by some people as a criticism of capitalism.

The overall societal discourse in its entanglement and complexity

In a given society discourse strands form the overall societal discourse in complex entanglement. In this respect it has to be considered that 'given societies' are never (entirely) homogeneous; therefore under certain circumstances one has to operate with social sub-groups of a society. In the Federal Republic of Germany, however, a strong ideological homogenization of the overall societal discourse has evidently taken place subsequent to the political turnabout in 1989, which will not be so easy to break down (see Teubert, 1997, 1999). Attention should also be paid to the fact that the overall discourse of a society is a partial discourse* of a (naturally heterogeneous) global discourse or in other words of the worldwide discourse which

– very cautiously put – has at the same time been homogenized (in the Western World) since 1989 and in tendency re-polarized (from 'the West versus the East' to 'the West versus the Orient, Islam').

No doubt, the overall societal discourse presents a particularly entwined and inter-dependently deeply rooted net. Discourse analysis has the aim to untangle this net and proceeds as a rule by first working out the individual discourse on individual discourse planes. An example of this would be: the media-immigration discourse (strand).

Such an analysis would be joined by others, such as the analysis of the political discourse strand on immigration, of the everyday discourse on immigration etc.

Subsequent to such analyses the question can be asked as a general rule as to how the discursive planes of the entire discourse strand concerned relate to one another. In this context the question would have to be answered, if and how the political discourse strand dovetails with that of the media and the everyday discourse strand, how and whether that of the media 'influences' that of the everyday discourse strand and thus 'eats into it' as it were, and so on.

History, present and future of discourse strands

In addition, discourse / discourse strands have *a history, a present and a future*.

Thus, it would be necessary to analyze longer time-frames of discursive processes in order to reveal their strength, the density of the entanglement of the respective discourse strands with others, changes, fracture, drying-up and re-emergence etc.. In

other words: it would be (in accordance with Foucault) necessary to carry out an 'archaeology of knowledge' or as he later said 'a genealogy'. This would be the basis for a discursive *prognostic concept*, possibly taking the form of unfolding scenarios, which would, however, also have to take into account the various *discursive events* (= events given great media coverage) that can be anticipated in future.

Such a project would of course be gigantic and could only be approached in the form of a large number of single projects. Yet, such single projects are very useful because they allow very reliable statements on certain discursive areas. Such statements can, for instance, be the basis from which to change the 'knowledge' on and the attitude towards foreigners and thus in turn have an impact on the further course that the discourse strand takes.

3.2 On the Question of the Completeness of Discourse Analyses

With the question of how complete discourse analyses are, we ask how representative, reliable and generally valid they are. The analysis is complete, when it reveals no further contents and formally new findings. On the whole, this completeness results – much to the irritation of primarily quantitative empirical social scientists who as a rule work with massive amounts of material – surprisingly soon, because discourse analysis deals with the respective fields of what can be said. The arguments and contents which can be read or heard on the theme immigration at a certain societal location at a certain time are astonishingly limited (and, in fact, mostly in the ambiguous sense of this word). Quantitative aspects do, however, also play a certain part: the frequency with which certain arguments emerge can be recorded. In this way the statements on a certain theme can be registered, which, for example,

bear slogan character whose dissemination always goes hand in hand with the fact, that it addresses whole lists of judgements and prejudices. The quantitative aspect of discourse analysis is accordingly always of less relevance to the significance of discourse analysis than the qualitative. These statements apply especially to conducting a synchronic cut through the discourse strand. Historically oriented analyses can proceed by conducting several synchronic cuts through a discourse strand – e.g. based on discursive events – and subsequently comparing them with each other. Such analyses provide information on changes to, and continuities of, discourse processes through time.

3.3 'Little Box of Tools' for Conducting Discourse Analyses

Preliminary remarks

In a brief summary I would now like to introduce our 'box of tools' to be used when conducting discourse analyses, though these cannot be explained in detail here (see Jäger, 1999).¹⁴

In the following the practical approach to the discourse-analytical discussion of empirical (text) material will be addressed. In order to conduct a complete investigation additional steps have to be taken. These entail first and foremost a justification of the project and what is to be investigated accompanied by an explanation of the theoretical approach and method ('theoretical part') which is necessary and useful to understand and follow the analysis.

Selection of the 'object' to be investigated, justification of the method and research-pragmatic suggestions to avoid short cuts and simplifications

The first thing for the researcher to do is to locate precisely his/her investigation (the object to be investigated). There are several possible traps one can run into here. For example, if the issue at stake is how racism is disseminated in the media or in everyday life, one should not take the term racism as a kind of magnifying glass and with it launch a search for the expression of this ideology. Instead, one should endeavour to determine the location at which such ideologies are expressed. Such a location is the discourse on immigrants, refugees, asylum etc. This discourse (strand) provides the material which has to be investigated.

Mostly, one has to concentrate (initially) on one discourse plane, for instance, the media. In some cases, however, several planes can also be investigated at the same time or also several sectors of the plane, e.g. women's magazines, news programmes on TV. Frequently one will only be able to investigate a partial sector of the discourse plane, e.g. printed media, popular media (pop songs). Why the investigation is dedicated to this sector has to be explained precisely: for example, because it promises to demonstrate in a special way, how a theme is disseminated to the masses or because this sector has not been investigated hitherto (whereby of course other sectors should be dealt with, which have already been investigated).

A 'synchronic' cut through the discourse strand which, insofar as it has become 'what it is' is at the same time diachronic-historic, can look different according to the theme and the discourse plane. In the case of printed media and the way they deal with the theme bio-politics consistently, but seldom in very much detail, an entire year could be taken. This is because even by thorough reading of the newspapers concerned,

the range of the discourse strand at stake might only be qualitatively completely covered over a longer period of time. In contrast to this the presentation of women in pop songs can (probably) be achieved using a few examples, because we can expect to find extremely exemplary densities. (Yet, this must be proved!)

It is important to identify the sub-themes of the discourse strand in the respective sector of the discourse plane and to allocate them (approximately) to the superior themes, which in their entirety constitute the discourse strand of the newspaper and/or of the sector concerned on the discourse planes.

The interplay of several discursive planes at regulating (mass) consciousness is particularly exciting but extremely work-intensive. Here one has to search for well justified examples from the various discourse planes and exemplify their interplay. The problem is multiplied when the interplay (the entanglements of various discourse strands) are to be investigated.

Method

A possible method for a (simple) discourse analysis (subsequent to introduction and justification of the theme (discourse strand)) is as follows:

- a) Brief characterization (of the sector), of the discourse plane, e.g. printed media, women's magazines, pop songs, video films.
- b) Establishing and processing the material base or archive (see analysis guideline for processing material below).

- c) Structure analysis: evaluating the material processed with regards to the discourse strand to be analyzed.
- d) Fine analysis of one or several articles (discourse fragments) which are as typical as possible for the sector, for instance, and also for the discourse position of the newspaper. This article (discourse fragment) has of course to be allocated to a superior theme.
- e) This is followed by the overall analysis in the sector concerned, e.g. in the newspaper concerned etc. This means, that all the hitherto essential results gained are reflected upon and added to an overall statement on the discourse strand in the newspaper or sector concerned. The question hovering over this concluding part could for instance be: 'What contribution is made by the newspaper concerned towards (the acceptance of) bio-politics in the Federal Republic of Germany at the present time and what future development can be expected?'

This is not necessarily a table of contents which has to be adhered to slavishly.

Variations are in fact possible. You should, however, pay attention to the fact, that we are dealing with the discourse analysis of the discourse strand at stake, of the sector concerned, on a discourse plane, e.g. of the newspaper in question.

Processing the material

Preliminary remarks

The following provides a kind of analytical guideline for processing the material. It is geared to the special problems involved in media analysis. Processing the material is at both the base and the heart of the subsequent discourse analysis. It is to be conducted with extreme caution and (with larger projects and several collaborators) to be conducted in the same sequence by all those involved without proceeding schematically. This is because the synoptic analysis (= comparative concluding analysis) subsequent to the individual investigations of a respective newspaper or magazine in a certain year, relies on the capacity to systematically line up the results alongside each other. While processing the material, ideas and interpretation approaches can / should be incorporated whenever one has such ideas. Such interpretative passages should, however, be especially marked, e.g. by underlining or printing in italics.

The following table provides an overview of the analytical steps to be undertaken and the instrumentarium (= box of tools) to be used:

Table

Analytical guidelines for processing material

- 1 Processing material for the structure analysis, e.g. of the entire selected discourse strand of a newspaper / magazine**

- 1.1 General characterization of the newspaper: political localization, readership, circulation etc.
- 1.2 Overview of (e.g.) the medium in question reviewing an entire year of the selected theme
 - 1.2.1 List of the articles covered which are relevant to the theme with respective particulars on the bibliographic data: abbreviated noteform on the theme; particulars on the kind of journalistic text, possible peculiarities; particulars on the section the article appears in when dealing with weekly newspapers / magazines etc.
 - 1.2.2 Summary of the theme addressed / covered by the newspaper / magazine; qualitative evaluation; striking lack of certain themes which had been addressed in other years of publication investigated; presentation, timing and frequency of certain themes with a view to possible discursive events
 - 1.2.3 Allocation of single themes to thematic areas (concerning the bio-political discourse strand, for instance, to the following sub-themes: 'illness / health', 'birth / life', 'death / dying', 'diet', 'economy', 'bio-ethics / concept of what is human' and to possible discourse strand entanglements (for instance: 'economy', 'fascism', 'ethics / morals' etc.)
- 1.3 Summary of 1.1 and 1.2: determination of the discourse position of the newspaper / magazine with regard to the respective theme

2 Processing the material for the exemplary *fine analysis* of *discourse fragments* of an article or a series of articles and so on, which is / are as typical as possible of the discourse position of the newspaper

2.1 Institutional framework: 'context'

2.1.1 Justification of the selection of the (typical) article(s)

2.1.2 Author (function and significance for the newspaper, special areas of coverage etc.)

2.1.3 Cause of the article

2.1.4 Which section of the newspaper / magazine is the article allocated to?

2.2 Text 'surface'

2.2.1 Graphic layout, including pictures and graphs

2.2.2 Headlines, headings, sub-headings

2.2.3 Structure of the article in units of meaning*

2.2.4 Themes addressed by the article (discourse fragments) (other themes touched upon, overlapping)

2.3 Rhetorical means

2.3.1 Kind and form of argumentation, argumentation strategies

2.3.2 Logic and composition

2.3.3 Implications and insinuations

2.3.4 Collective symbolism or 'figurativeness'*, symbolism, metaphorism etc. in language and graphic contexts (statistics, photographs, pictures, caricatures etc.)

2.3.5 Idioms, sayings, clichés

2.3.6 Vocabulary and style

2.3.7 Players (persons, pronominal structure)

2.3.8 References: to (the) science(s), particulars on the sources of knowledge and so on

2.4 Ideological statements based on contents

2.4.1 What notion of, e.g. the human being, underlies the article, does the article convey?

2.4.2 What kind of understanding of, e.g. society, underlies the article, does the article convey?

2.4.3 What kind of (e.g.) understanding of technology underlies the article, does the article convey?

2.4.4 What is the future perspective which the article drafts?

2.5 Other striking issues

2.6. Summary: Localization of the article in the discourse strand (see 1.3). The 'argument', the major statement of the entire article; its general 'message'

3.4 Concluding interpretation of the entire discourse strand investigated with reference to the processed material used (structure and fine analysis / analyses)

After repeated treatment of the processed material, justification of connections between the various planes on which material has been processed, additions to interpretative approaches, rejection of too weakly justified interpretative approaches etc., a complete package of processed material with possibly (next to) no gaps is now provided. With this the foundation has been laid for conducting an overall analysis of the discourse strand in question. As far as the aesthetics of the analysis is concerned, no rules can nor should be prescribed. What the final result looks like depends on the quality of the 'writing style', the target group, the place of publication

etc.. The main thing is that the presented argumentation is stringent, rich in material and convincing.

When dealing with several text corpora (e.g. several newspapers, films etc.), an additional comparative (synoptic) analysis* follows, especially when striving for statements on entire discursive planes.

End of Table

3 Initial considerations on the analysis of dispositives

Discourses are not phenomena which exist independently; they form the elements - and are the prerequisite - of the existence of so-called dispositives. A dispositive is the constantly evolving context of items of knowledge which are contained in speaking / thinking – acting – materialization. To visualize the concept of the dispositive in the form of a figure, imagine a triangle, or rather a circle rotating in history with three central 'transit points or transit stations'.* These are:

1. Discursive practices in which primarily knowledge is transported
2. Actions as non-discursive practices, in which, however, knowledge is transported, which are preceded by knowledge and/or constantly accompanied by knowledge
3. Manifestations / materializations which represent materializations of discursive practices through non-discursive practices, whereby the existence of

manifestations ('objects') only perseveres through discursive and non-discursive practices

The dispositive has a certain consistency. It is, however, also always subjected to historical change. In addition, the constant impact of other dispositives has to be heeded.

In order to establish the (respective) current state of such a dispositive one can analyze this 'triangle', or this circle rotating in history comprising three 'transit stations' (discourse, action, manifestations / materializations), using a synchronic cut.

The dispositives circulate with one another and penetrate each other. A certain concrete discursive practice is as a rule of significance to several dispositives. An example would be the discourse on traffic. It entangles itself with the economy, with illness, health etc. Perhaps it is precisely such entanglements which glue society together and convey its context. The 'triangle' - or the circle rotating in history - represents a rough analytical simplification of the term dispositive and is therefore only appropriate as a basic thought pattern, as a strongly simplified model, which one can conceive of as follows:

Hinweis für den Setzer

Dispositive analysis whose object of investigation is the evolving context of knowledge, action and manifestations, therefore has to cover the following steps:

1. Reconstruction of knowledge in the discursive practices (as illustrated above, whereby such an analysis forms the foundation for the further analytical steps of a dispositive analysis by directing attention to the following aspects of the dispositive to be investigated, e.g. to 'blank areas' in the discourse, important manifestations which belong to it etc.)
2. Reconstruction of knowledge which underlies the non-discursive practices
3. Reconstruction of the non-discursive practices which have led to the manifestations / materializations and the knowledge contained therein

The reconstruction of knowledge, which in fact always results in texts also always covers the form in which knowledge emerges, i.e. how it presents itself, whether this knowledge comes to light openly, whether it disguises itself – in the shape of implications – how it is packaged argumentatively etc.. At this point one should recall yet again, that the term knowledge is used here in a very broad sense and must therefore in no way be regarded as being equal to 'recognition' and that it also covers feelings and affects etc., in other words, all aspects of the human consciousness.

While the analysis of the discursive components of the dispositive has already been discussed at length, several questions still have to be asked:

1. How can the knowledge that underlies and accompanies the actions and/or non-discursive practices be reconstructed?

2. How can we get at the manifestations / materializations for the analysis of dispositives and how can we process them, so that we can establish the knowledge that underlies them?

On 1.: Knowledge in actions

Actions can be observed and described. The point is how to reconstruct the knowledge that conditions and accompanies them. A simple example: A person is being observed walking along the street and looking for a baker's shop in which he/she buys a loaf of bread. I now have to find out, what this person knows and wants. He/she knows, that he/she has to go to a certain place to be able to buy bread. He/she knows, that he/she has to dress in a certain way (put on shoes etc.). He/she knows, that he/she has to cross a street and that in so-doing he/she has to take care in the traffic and respect the highway code. Furthermore, he/she knows, that a baker's shop is situated at a certain place in a street, which he/she has to keep a look out for. He/she knows, that he/she can get bread there and that he/she has to have money ready to pay for it. In fact, it is a large quantity of knowledge that underlies such an easy action as buying bread, whose complexity I would merely like to hint at here.

That was a very simple example. A more complex one would be: I observe a person who has dug a hole at the edge of a street and is working away at a large pipe in this hole. That is all I observe! A precondition of the fact, that the knowledge connected with this action can be reconstructed is, that I – in a similar way as with the buying-bread example, but much more sophisticated, have knowledge at my disposal with the aid of which I can understand what this person is doing on the base of his/her

knowledge. I am lacking – at least in part – this knowledge, so that, if I want to understand what this person is doing, I can address him/her and ask him/her, what and why he/she is doing what he/she is doing. He/she might well reply: 'I am mending a burst pipe.' Equipped with this knowledge, I understand a lot better, what the person is doing. I could be contented with this, but decide to ask further: 'But why are you doing it?' He/she might answer: 'To mend the burst pipe.' He/she might add: 'It is my job!' and even add: 'I have to earn money somehow!' etc.. The knowledge hidden in this activity is in fact quite complex; basically it can be traced back and extended to include the question as to the necessity or economic practice of dependent wage labour.

A far more complex action, knowledge on which is a lot harder to reconstruct would be, for instance, observing a person, who goes to a bank to sign a cheque. What is visible to me is exceptionally little; a precondition of interpreting it is a huge amount of knowledge with the help of which I can understand what this person is doing and/or can reconstruct the 'hidden' knowledge in his/her action.

On 2.: Knowledge in manifestations / materialisations

I observe an object, a house, a church, a bicycle. In contrast to the preceding examples, I cannot ask any of these objects for their knowledge. They do not have a meaning to themselves and are also not capable of giving me any information. Therefore, I must, to begin with, rely on my own knowledge in order to be able to reconstruct the knowledge and action, which were the preconditions of the production of these objects. Not only that; whether the object is a church, a horse-stable, a museum or a public convenience is not or hardly the kind of information, which the

object actively provides me with. I have to extend my knowledge, analyze, ask experts and users, consult statistics, maps, books, etc.. Only then can I establish the knowledge that has flowed into it the object in question.

One has to ask of course, how to proceed with very complex dispositives (as dispositive packages), e.g. the war in Kosovo, especially since access to it was very difficult. To what extent can one rely on existing discursivization, i.e. statistics, photographs, reports, media commentaries etc.? How can the discourse positions, which flow into them be recognized? - By comparison with others? Here we have an additional problem, that of mental or objective discursivization, which still does not exist if 'one personally' questions the manifestations as to the knowledge which has flowed into them.

Here, again, we are not dealing with the establishment of 'truths' but with allocations that have a certain validity, yet, which are always interwoven with interests. Thus, our view must always be directed towards these interests as well, including our own.

Special problems emerge here, the fact e.g. that one does not only establish neutral knowledge, but that interpretations already flow into it and, moreover, knowledge is forgotten and re-interpretations and the veiling of knowledge take place.

A general rule applies here: in no way can I rely on my own knowledge to reconstruct the knowledge that preconditions an object.

In addition, the knowledge, which originally 'flowed into' an object through an allocated meaning is not, or at least no more completely, identical with the object in

the present time. The object can have been allocated another meaning in the course of its history, which is different from the meaning that was originally allocated to it.

'Legends' might have been formed, re-adjustments may have emerged. Consider, for instance, the current use of a church as a museum or a stable for horses or the contradictory testimonies of a witness to a traffic accident.

There is a further problem: where there is knowledge, there is power. Where materializations exist, power and knowledge have been at work and continue to be so, since otherwise the materializations lose their meaning and rot. Power as such is not visible. Can it be made visible? - In an indirect way? In the form of effects? All knowledge is, of course, linked to power. In all knowledge which prevails, power prevails. It is generated by power and exercises power. Thus, where there is knowledge, there is power. Where knowledge is weakened, power can be weakened.

If we consider the dispositive as the concrete context in which the three knowledge aspects work in connection with one another, a form of analysis is possible, which is, however, very complex. Michel Foucault's book 'Überwachen und Strafen' ('Discipline and Punish') (Foucault, 1989) represents such a dispositive analysis. And also Victor Klemperer's diaries can be read as a dispositive analysis (Klemperer, 1995). Neither of them have provided an explicit method, but have applied it implicitly – Foucault says 'experimentally' - by analyzing the discourses, assembling knowledge, consulting statistics, critically deconstructing them, drawing conclusions from them, adding opinions to them etc.. Thus, the considerations presented here cannot present us with a recipe let alone a method which can be schematically applied. They do, however, trigger ideas as to how we can approach analytically the complex context of discourse, action and the resulting - developing or established -

materializations and/or manifestations. At the heart of these endeavours is the discourse analysis that can also be related to texts and can be gained through the reconstruction of knowledge in non-discursive practices and materializations. An explicit method for this has yet to be - and will only be - developed in connection with concrete research projects. This would also contribute to bridging the existing gap between discourse analysis and empirical social research.

Translated from the original German manuscript by Iris Bünger and Robert Tonks

Translators' notes

1. Terms preceding * are included in the glossary below.
2. Footnotes and quotations were translated from the author's German manuscript so that deviations from English translations published elsewhere are possible.
3. Sources are given in the language the author consulted, both in the text and the bibliography. Titles of the sources provided in the text and footnotes of the author's original manuscript have been translated into English - using the titles of corresponding English-language publications if available – and have been added in parentheses.

Bibliography

Glossary

acting/doing	Handeln / Tätigkeit
'agents' of 'knowledge (valid at a certain place at a certain time)'	'Träger' von (jeweils gültigem) 'Wissen'
'aggregate works of art'	Gesamtkunstwerke
all-encompassing societal dispositive	Gesamtgestellschaftliches Dispositiv
all kinds of contents which make up a consciousness	Bewusstseinsinhalte
allocation of meaning	Bedeutungszuweisung
application concepts	Applikationsvorgaben
cataphoreses or image fractures	Katachresen oder Bildbrüche
'central transit points or transit stations'	'Durchlaufstationen'
collective symbolism	Kollektivsymbolik
comparative (synoptic) analysis	Vergleichende (synoptische) Analyse
'constant rampant growth of discourses'	'Wuchern der Diskurse'
context of linking discourse to power	Zusammenhang von Diskurs und Macht
critical discourse and dispositive analysis	Kritische Diskurs- und Dispositivanalyse
cultural stereotypes (frequently called ' <i>topoi</i> '), which are handed down and used collectively	Kulturelle Stereotypen (häufig ' <i>Topoi</i> ' genannt), die kollektiv tradiert und benutzt werden

current discourse	Aktueller Diskurs
denial strategies	Verleugnungsstrategien
Diachronic	diachron
discourse fragment	Diskursfragment
discourse position	Diskursposition
discourse process	Diskursverlauf
discourse strand	Diskursstrang
discourse system	Diskurssystem
'discursified anew'	'umdiskursiviert'
discursive contests	Diskursive Kämpfe
discursive entanglement	Diskursive Verstrickung
discursive events	Diskursive Ereignisse
discursive formation	Diskursive Formation
discursive knot	Diskursiver Knoten
discursive mega-events	Diskursive Großereignisse
'discursive milling mass'	'diskursives Gewimmel'
discourse plane	Diskursebene
discursive practices	Diskursive Praxen
doing and/or formative action that shapes society	Handeln und Gestalten
Duisburg Institute for Linguistics and Social Research = DISS	Duisburger Institut für Sprach- und Sozialforschung = DISS
education discourse	Erziehungsdiskurs
entanglement of discourse strands	Diskursstrangverschränkung
episteme	Episteme
everyday knowledge	Alltagswissen

fields of objects	Gegenstandsfelder
'figurativeness'	'Bildlichkeit'
'flow of ,knowledge' – and(or all societal knowledge stored – throughout all time'	'Fluss von ,Wissen' bzw. sozialen Wissensvorräten durch die Zeit'
function of discourses as techniques to legitimize and ensure government	Funktion von Diskursen als herrschaftslegitimierende und – sichernde Techniken
institutionally consolidated concept of speech	Institutionell verfestigte Redeweise
inter-discourse	Interdiskurs
Knowledge	Wissen
knowledge (valid at a certain place at a certain time)	Jeweils gültiges Wissen
knowledge (valid at a certain place at a certain time) of discourses and/or dispositives	(jeweils gültiges) Wissen der Diskurse bzw. der Dispositive
language-based and iconographic means by which (discourses) work	Sprachliche und ikonographische Wirkungsmittel (der Diskurse)
linking-up of the various discourse strands	Vernetzung der verschiedenen Diskursstränge
manifestations / materializations	Sichtbarkeiten / Vergegenständlichungen
matter	Materie
media discourse	Mediendiskurs

non-discursive practices	Nicht-diskursive Praxen
opposing discourse	Gegendiskurs
origins of images	Bildspendebereiche
partial discourse	Teil-Diskurs
political discourse	Politikdiskurs
power mechanisms and institutions	Machtmechanismen und – institutionen
reality concepts	Realitätsvorgaben
relationship between discourse and societal reality	Verhältnis von Diskurs und gesellschaftlicher Wirklichkeit
relativizing strategies	Relativierungsstrategien
sensory human activity	Menschlich-sinnliche Tätigkeit
'societal flows of knowledge through time'	'soziale Wissensflüsse durch die Zeit'
societal locations	Gesellschaftliche Orte
special discourse	Spezialdiskurs
spectrum of what can be said and what can be done	Sag- und Machbarkeitsfelder
strategies to remove taboos	Enttabuisierungsstrategien
sui generis material realities	Materialitäten sui generis
synchronic	Synchron
temporarily valid truths	Zeitweilig gültige Wahrheiten
to exercise power with all its effects	Machtwirkungen ausüben
truth value	Wahrheitswert
unit of meaning	Sinneinheit

urgency (original French: <i>urgence</i> ; I. B. / R. T.).	Notstand
--	----------

¹ For the difference between this and other discourse-theoretical approaches: Jäger, 1996b.

² A detailed presentation (with examples of applications) is contained in my 'Critical Discourse Analysis' (CDA), which appeared in 1999 in a revised and extended edition (Jäger, 1999). The CDA provides the foundation for numerous projects, which have been conducted at the Duisburg Institute for Linguistics and Social Research (Duisburger Institut für Sprach- und Sozialforschung = DISS*); see, for example, Jäger, 1992, M. Jäger, 1996, Cleve, 1997, M. Jäger & S. Jäger & Ruth & Schulte-Holtey & Wichert, 1997, Jäger & Kretschmer et al., 1998, M. Jäger & Cleve & Ruth & Jäger, 1998, et al.

³ For an introduction: Link, 1982

⁴ '... the term *power* is used which covers many individual, definable and defined mechanisms which appear capable of inducing behaviour or discourses.' (Foucault, 1992: 32)

⁵ Especially Link, 1982, Drews/Gerhard/Link, 1985, Link/Link-Heer, 1990, Becker/Gerhard/Link, 1997

⁶ See also Link, 1995, who underlines the *formative constitutive* force of discourses and understands discourse (as Foucault) as 'a material production instrument with which in a regulated way (social) objects (as for example 'madness', 'sex', 'normality' etc.) and also the subjectivities corresponding to them are produced.' (ibid.: 744)

⁷ See below for more on the problem of how complete and generalizable the statements of discourse analyses are.

⁸ Leontjew's reference to Marx soon becomes clear, if we recall Marx' first thesis on Feuerbach, in which he demands: '... that the object, the reality, the sensory nature is (not only) to be dealt with in

the frame of the *object or the ideology*, but as *human sensory activity, practice, ... subjectively*.' (MEW 3: 5)

⁹ Jurt refers to Castoriadis for whom 'the societal things ... are only what they are due to meanings.'
(Jurt, 1999: 11)

¹⁰ Foucault speaks in the 'Archäologie des Wissens' ('Archaeology of Knowledge') of relations which are not present in the object. In my opinion these are the discourses which at the same time keep the object alive from outside through the meaningful reference of people to them. (Foucault, 1988: 68)

¹¹ A strictly linguistic instrumentarium means in this context grammatic and stylistic details that can be important to the analysis but are not absolutely necessary.

¹² The problem of the complete treatment of a discourse strand hinted at here I will discuss below. This is of particular importance because the expressiveness and general validity of a discourse analysis is at stake.

¹³ Such an experiment is provided by Caborn, 1999.

¹⁴ We use such short texts when conducting projects as a kind of assistance or guideline for first treatments of the given material. They serve as memory aids (or check-lists).