Critical Discourse Analysis: An Overview[1]

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Abstract: *This paper provides an overview of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a relatively recent approach to analyzing discourse. The paper begins with the various definitions of the term "discourse," then provides a brief overview of the basic tenets of CDA as outlined by its practitioners. This is followed by a summary of two representative works in CDA. The merits of CDA are pointed out, as are the criticisms leveled at the approach and the responses to them. The paper concludes with a general evaluation of the contributions of CDA to the field of discourse analysis.*

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to synthesize some of the wealth of writing on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), to introduce and evaluate this approach to analyzing discourse. In doing so, I will point to the merits of CDA, the criticism which is directed at it, as a well as its proponents' responses to such criticism. Critical Discourse Analysis is an approach to analyzing discourse that has its roots in the early eighties. The approach has since gained much popularity and become a well established means of analyzing both spoken, written, and, more recently, all types of media discourse. However, it has for long been criticized, and still continues to fuel much debate. Before discussing this approach, I shall first provide an overview of various definitions of the term *discourse* as it is a key concept in the discussion of this approach. Then I shall give a summary of the aims and basic tenets of CDA and a brief exposition of representative work by two of its major proponents, Norman Fairclough and Tuen van Dijk. This will be followed by a brief discussion of the merits of the approach. Finally, I shall discuss the short-comings of CDA as seen by both critics and practitioners of the approach.

1. Definitions of the Term *Discourse*

The term *discourse* is loosely defined in the literature. It has been defined in different ways by a number of linguists. In general, it is commonly used to refer to the use of language beyond the sentence level (see for example Harris, 1952; Stubbs, 1983; Chafe, 1992, 2003). The term 'discourse,' however, may also be used in a broader sense to refer to a specific body of writing on a certain topic, or unified by a certain goal or set of characteristics, as for example religious discourse, political discourse, racist discourse or feminist discourse (see for example Lee, 1992; Wodak and Reisigl, 2001, 2003). Yet a third approach is to

define discourse in terms of "language use" (as in the case of Brown and Yule, 1983; Candlin, 1997; and Fasold, 1990, among others). Still others, see that discourse should be defined in view of what it "accomplishes" in society (see for example the work of Faircloughb, 1995a, 1995b, 2001; Meyer, 2001; van Dijk 1991, 1993, 1995, 2005; and Wodak and Reisigl, 2001).

The renowned linguist and stylistician Henry Widdowson (1995, 2004) criticizes the fuzziness not only of the term discourse, but of the field of discourse analysis itself. He quotes Michael Stubbs (1983) who in his book *Discourse Analysis* fails to give a precise definition of the field. Stubbs defines discourse analysis as "attempts to study the organization of language above the sentence, or above the clause, and therefore to study larger linguistic units such as conversational exchanges or written texts" (Stubbs, 1983, p. 1, cited in Widdowson, 2004, p.1). Widdowson sees that the differences between a clause and a sentence are too great for the two words to be used interchangeably. He likewise objects to the "indiscriminate use" of the terms *discourse* and *text*. The first chapter of his book *Text, Context, Pretext: Critical Issues in Discourse Analysis* (2004), is dedicated to the discussion of the differences between the two terms. Beginning with Harris (1952), whom he credits with being the first to use the term discourse, Widdowson points out how Harris himself in his seminal work "Discourse analysis" replaced the term *discourse* in the title with the word *text* in the body of the paper, thus giving the impression that the two are synonymous. What discourse or text meant for Harris was simply a stretch of language that extended beyond the sentence. Furthermore, what he was interested in was how the sentences tied together rather than what elements in the text created meaning or produced a certain effect. Referring to the "basic operations" he outlines for comparing different sentences in a text, Harris states:

> All this, however, is still distinct from an interpretation of the findings, which must take the meaning of morphemes into consideration and ask what the author was about when he produced the text. Such interpretation is obviously quite separate from the formal findings. (Harris, 1952, p. 29; cited in Widdowson, 2004, p.3)

Two important points to be made about Harris' notion of discourse and discourse analysis are that first, he equates discourse with text, and second, that he sees discourse analysis as concerned only with the analysis of the form of the text/discourse, and distinct from the investigation of its meaning. Such separation of form and meaning which may have been acceptable more than half a century ago, is no longer valid from the view point of current approaches to the analysis of discourse. Both formal and semantic properties of a text intertwine to create meaning.

Harris, however, is not alone in his conflation of the terms discourse and text. In fact, Widdowson notes that many other linguists do not differentiate between the two terms, even those who specialize in the analysis of discourse, as for example Stubbs (1983). He also cites Wallace Chafe (1992, 2003) who has no quarrel with the use of the terms text and discourse interchangeably. This can

be seen in the definition of discourse provided by Wallace Chafe in the *Oxford International Encyclopedia of Linguistics*: Chafe writes:

> The term discourse is used in somewhat different ways by different scholars, but underlying the differences is a common concern for language beyond the boundaries of isolated sentences. The term TEXT is used in similar ways. Both terms may refer to a unit of language larger than the sentence: one may speak of a 'discourse' or a 'text' (Chafe 1992, p. 356; 2003, p. 439-440; cited in Widdowson, 2004, p. 6)

Unlike Harris and Chafe, however, Widdowson does not see that the terms discourse and text can be used interchangeably. As mentioned above, his discussion of the differences between the two terms takes up an entire chapter of a book, and thus any attempt to summarize his views in a couple of lines is bound to oversimplify his argument. But to sum up, Widdowson sees that a text is not necessarily a stretch of language beyond the sentence; in fact a text may be a single sentence in isolation, or a single word, or even a letter. Widdowson (2004) provides a number of examples to illustrate, some of which are: "Trespassers will be prosecuted … Open … PTO … P" (pp.6-7). Even though none of these examples is language beyond the sentence, we still understand each one as unit of language in its own right, with a specific meaning which we understand because we have been "socialized into a particular reality" (p.6). He observes: "Texts can come in all shapes and sizes: they can correspond in extent with any linguistic unit… I identify a text not by its linguistic extent, but by its social intent" (p.6). Recipients of texts understand their meaning by relating them to their world knowledge or what Widdowson refers to as "extralinguistic reality" (p.8). Once we draw upon our extralinguistic knowledge to make sense of what is intended by a text, it becomes discourse. Widdowson elaborates: "it is this activation, this acting of context on code, this indexical conversion of the symbol that I refer to as discourse" (p.8). In other words, a text is what a writer/speaker produces; it only becomes discourse when it is interpreted by the reader/listener and understood as having a certain meaning.

Verdonk (2002), like Widdowson also distinguishes between the two terms text and discourse. Comparing between the two terms, Verdonk (2002) defines text as "a stretch of language complete in itself and of some considerable extent as: a business letter, a leaflet, a news report, a recipe and so on" (p. 17). Discourse, on the other hand, he defines as the "process of activation of a text by relating it to a context of use" (p. 18). This view of discourse is very close to Widdowson's; both Verdonk and Widdowson emphasize the interactive nature of discourse. Verdonk further elaborates, focusing on the process of relating a text to its context, and refers to this act of "contextualization" as the reader or hearer's act of "reconstruction of the writer's (or speaker's) intended message." (p. 18). It is only when the text is reconstructed in the addressee's mind and given meaning that it becomes discourse. That the original text in the author's mind, however, and the reconstruction of this text as discourse will always be the same is in no way guaranteed. The arrival at the meaning of a text becomes,

therefore, a "negotiation between writer (speaker) and reader (hearer) in a contextualized social interaction" (p. 18). Both Verdonk and Widdowson agree that a text only becomes discourse when there is an attempt to interpret it, to place it within a certain context. They also agree that a one to one mapping of text and discourse cannot be guaranteed, and the success of such mapping is dependent on what is generally referred to in semantics literature as 'shared background knowledge', or 'presupposition.'

Widdowson (2004) further elaborates that the meaning of a text resides in as much in the reader/listener as it does in the writer/speaker; he even seems to place more emphasis on the former, the recipient. On the other hand, the *effect* of what is said is totally dependent upon *assumptions* that the recipient of a text makes about the *intentions* of its producer. He states: "effect is not a feature of the text but a function of the discourse, either as intentionally written into the text or interpretatively read into it" (p.13). How a recipient reads a text is based upon his view of the world, value judgments, beliefs and so on. And thus what a recipient reads is his/her own discourse, not that of the producer of the text. It is only when there is a matching of both parties' "social realities," or a willingness on the part of the recipient to cooperate and view the text from the standpoint of the producer that there will be a matching of the intention behind a text and the recipient's interpretation of it. Widdowson adds that a face-to-face interaction has the advantage of allowing the participants to negotiate/modify one another's intention/interpretation and the text is then "jointly constructed" (Widdowson, 2004, p.13). But of course, in reality, even "joint construction" of a text does not guarantee mutual understanding.

1.1 Functions of Discourse
Yet another view of discourse analysis, which de-emphasizes length as a distinguishing criterion of discourse, is one which focuses on language use and function as a more important feature of discourse. Along these lines, Brown and Yule (1983) state in the opening lines of their book *Discourse Analysis*:

> The analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic form independent of the purposes or functions which these forms are designed to serve in human affairs. (Brown and Yule, 1983, p.1)

Here, Brown and Yule oppose the idea of limiting discourse analysis to the analysis of a text in terms of its structure, or formal components, as suggested by Harris (1952). This, they see, is the task of grammarians, and an area that has long been studied. Rather, Brown and Yule see that the scope of discourse analysis is to study the function of language. They themselves identify two major functions of language, *transactional* and *interactional*, but point out that the "division is an analytical convenience" (p.1).[2]

Also focusing on the function of discourse, Candlin (1997) elaborates on the important role that discourse plays in shaping practices in a society. Candlin states:

> We may go on to discuss the constructive and dynamic role of either spoken or written discourse in structuring areas of knowledge and the social and institutional practices which are associated with them.   In this sense, discourse is a means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds, a means which both *constructs* and *is constructed by* [italics added] a set of social practices within these worlds, and in so doing both reproduces and constructs afresh particular social discursive practices, constrained or encouraged by more macro movements in the overarching social formation. (Candlin, 1977, p. ix cited. in Jaworski and Coupland, 1999, p.3)

It is, in fact, this definition of discourse as social practice and a dynamic means of constructing institutional practices which underlies the approach to discourse as conceived by CD analysts. Practitioners of CDA demonstrate how discourse is in fact *social practice* a means of constructing reality, and shaping ideologies (see Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 2001a; among others).   CDA practitioners maintain that the ideological *work* that discourse does, especially elite discourse, is often covert, and hardly ever questioned. This will be elaborated in the following section.

2. Basic Tenets of CDA
CDA is based on the belief that discourse is not only a means of expressing or reflecting reality, but of creating, or enforcing a set of assumptions and beliefs, a certain ideology. Discourse is not an aspect of society, but rather a social practice that *constructs* reality.   This is the main tenet of critical discourse analysis. Fairclough (1992), who is considered the principle founder of CDA, emphasizes the role of discourse in society. He states: "Discourse for me is more than just language use: it is language use, whether speech or writing, seen as a type of *social practice* [italics added]" (Fairclough, 1992, p.28, cited in Jaworski and Coupland, 1999, p.2.).   Commenting on how critical discourse analysis differs from other modes of analyzing discourse, Jaworski and Coupland (1999) state:

> If we ask what is the purpose of doing discourse analysis, the answer from critical discourse analysts would go well beyond the description of language in use. Discourse analysis offers a means of exposing or *deconstructing* [italics added] the social practices which constitute 'social structure' and what we might call the conventional meaning structures of social life. (Jaworski and Coupland, 1999, p.6)

The particular kind of discourse in which CD analysts are interested is that which reflects and is employed to reinforce the power of certain groups/individuals.   More specifically, CD analysts are interested in power abuse, domination, hegemony, manipulation and the construction and perpetuation of ideologies that serve powerful groups/individuals.   Thus they start out with a certain ideological stance, and often times a political agenda, and set out to analyze any type of language use (and all kinds of semiosis, including gestures of speakers, images, and other non-verbal modes of expression) that

reflect domination, or power abuse. Much of their research has thus typically focused on all types of discrimination, with particular emphasis on gender, ethnic, and racist prejudices.

However, the focus on power relations, or how power is encoded in interaction is not what distinguishes CDA from other types of discourse analysis. In fact, many studies within sociolinguistics and conversation analysis also deal with issues of power in interaction. (See for example Brown and Levinson, 1987; Lakoff, 1975, Scotton, 1988; Shalaby, 1991; Tannen, 1994; Zimmerman and West, 1975 among many others.) What distinguishes CDA from other discourse analysis is its aim; CDA seeks to point out features of domination and power abuse in order to expose camouflaged agendas of certain powerful individuals or elite groups. In most cases, these individuals/groups act according to their own interests and to the disadvantage of the dominated groups/masses, often concealing or distorting facts. By exposing the hidden objectives of these dominant groups, and the 'work' they accomplish by their discourse, CD analysts attempt, first of all, to make the dominated aware of how they are misinformed and (ideologically) manipulated, or even victimized. Second, they attempt to challenge and resist the work of dominant groups/individuals who seek their own interests at the expense of others. As such they openly acknowledge that their research is socio/politically motivated and thus distinct from other academically oriented discourse analysts. In the words of the practitioners themselves:

> CDA is not just another form of academic analysis. It also has aspirations to take the part of those who suffer from linguistic – discursive forms of domination and exploitations. Part of the task is to contribute to the development and spread of a critical awareness of language as a factor in domination. (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 186).

The same idea resounds in van Dijk's words:

> Though in different terms, and from different points of view, most of us deal with power, dominance, hegemony, inequality, and the discursive processes of their enactment, concealment, legitimation and reproduction. And many of us are interested in the subtle means by which text and talk manage the mind and manufacture consent, on the one hand, and articulate and sustain resistance and challenge, on the other. (van Dijk, 1993, p. 132, cited in Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter, 2000, p. 147)

2.1 CDA as an Interdisciplinary Approach

As the proponents of CDA assert, their approach to the analysis of texts is interdisciplinary, using findings of research not only in subfields of linguistics such as syntax, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics, but also in other disciplines. As they often reiterate, language is too complex a phenomenon to be explained by linguistic theory alone. Because language interacts with other aspects of life, theories from other disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, cognitive psychology, literature, history, and cultural studies have to be invoked to explain certain linguistic phenomena. For example, in order to investigate how discourse

influences the construction of ideology, van Dijk sees that research and theories in cognitive psychology along with a systematic linguistic analysis have to be employed to account for the effect of public discourse on opinion formation among the masses. (See the discussion below of van Dijk's work on discourse and manipulation (van Dijk, 2006)). Similarly, in a number of his works, Fairclough draws upon media research to discuss the effect of media discourse on readers/viewers.

The interdisciplinary nature of CDA is also central to the idea that all discourse is historical; that is, it can only be understood in its historical context. Commenting on this, Meyer (2001) states: "the notion of context is crucial for CDA, since this explicitly includes social, psychological, political and ideological components and thereby postulates an interdisciplinary procedure" (p. 15). The degree to which historical context is taken into account differs from one analyst to another. Ruth Wodak, a prominent CDA practitioner and member of the Vienna School for critical discourse analysis, makes it the basis of her analysis of racist discourse. (See Wodak (2001) for an extended discussion of the approach). The historical approach focuses on all aspects of the historical context which gives rise to a particular discourse type. By historical context is meant all extra-linguistic factors that can influence the production of a text, including but not limited to "sociological variables (group membership, age, professional socialization) and psychological determinants (experience, routine, etc.) play an essential role in text production" (Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter, 2000, p. 155). But then one may also argue that to judge a text by all of the sociological and psychological determinants mentioned above may in itself lead to a biased interpretation of the text based on a particular reading anchored in preconceived notions the analyst may have, or biased schemata s/he may have formed about particular individuals/groups.

The idea of discourse as historical is also linked to the work of the highly influential Russian literary critic and theorists, Bakhtin and Volosinov, particularly regarding the dialogic nature of texts. Bakhtin's ideas on the influence of prior texts in both the production and understanding of a particular text have circulated widely and gained much appeal. Furthermore, Kristeva's work in this area and her coining of the term "intertextuality" have also contributed to the dissemination of Bakhtin's ideas regarding the relationship of texts to one another, and how they react and refer to one another, with new texts looking backwards and ascribing new meaning to old texts. Along these lines Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter (2000) state:

> Discourses are historical and can only be understood in relation to their context. At the meta-theoretical level this corresponds to the approach of Wittgenstein (1984, p. 7), according to which the meaning of an utterance rests in its usage in a specific situation. Discourses are not only embedded in a particular culture, ideology or history, but are also connected intertextually to other discourses. (p. 146.)

Van Dijk (2001a) likewise acknowledges the influence of many researchers both outside the field of linguistics and within who have studied power and domination.[3] Among those whose work has greatly influenced CDA is the French philosopher Foucault, particularly in relation to notions of power, and dominance, and also what van Dijk refers to as "the more philosophical notion of 'orders of discourse'" (van Dijk, 2001a, p. 364). Likewise, both the contemporary French social philosopher Pierre Bourdieu, and the Arab-American intellectual and literary critic, Edward Said, who himself was influenced by Foucault,[4] have had a significant impact on CDA. As the scope of this paper does not allow the discussion of the ways in which CDA practitioners have been influenced by various intellectuals, I limit myself to the discussion of some of the ways Bourdieu and Said have impacted the approach to discourse adopted by CDA.

2.1.1 The Influence of Bourdieu on CDA

While van Dijk (2001) refers to the general influence of Bourdieu's work on CDA, he does not elaborate on the nature of this influence. However, it is easy to detect in CDA traces of Bourdieu's work on language, culture and society. More specifically, the effect of his writings on the importance of the context of a particular text and its role in the comprehension and interpretation of the text can be seen in the work of CDA practitioners. Also important are Bourdieu's ideas on how the "processe[s] of labeling and classification" of a text color its reception, particularly when it is internationally circulated. Furthermore, according to Bourdieu, context does not only refer to the relevant information that influences the way a text is perceived or interpreted; but, in his view, it also refers to the general cultural milieu that produces a certain writer or thinker (see Bourdieu, 1991, 1999, pp. 221-225). Of course, Bourdieu is not alone in stressing the importance of context in the interpretation of texts; many researchers in the fields of pragmatics, discourse analysis, and conversation analysis stress the importance of context in the production, understanding and interpretation of texts, and discourse in general whether spoken or written. Nevertheless, Bourdieu is distinguished by what he specifically points to as constituting context.

Bourdieu (1999) refers to context as "field of production." Speaking about the danger of texts circulating without their field of production, and then being read by recipients, who may have a totally different field of production themselves, leads to much misunderstanding. He adds that when texts are internationally circulated, they are further subject to misunderstanding due to a "process of labeling and classification" (p. 222) which includes among other important factors, who translates and publishes the text. One may also add to this, who quotes the text, in what context, and who re-labels it. But more important, and of particular relevance to the aims of CDA, is Bourdieu's call for "raising awareness and knowledge of the ways in which different national fields function" (p.226) because he believes that

> the greater the ignorance of the original context, the higher the risk that the
> text will be used in a different sense… The aim must be to produce a

scientific knowledge of national fields of production, the national categories of thought that originate there, and to diffuse this knowledge as widely as possible. (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 226)

Part of what CD analysts aim to do is to make people aware of how discourse is often stripped of its context in order to conceal certain facts or misinform the public.

2.1.2 The Influence of Said on CDA

Like that of many other contemporary intellectuals, the influence of Said's work on CDA is recognized, and specifically mentioned by Chouliarki and Fairclough (1999), and van Dijk (2001). But as with Bourdieu, none of them elaborates on the nature of the impact of Said's work. Indeed, Said's work has inspired many of the ideas prevalent in CDA, particularly regarding the effect of certain Western literary works in promoting racism, and misrepresenting the 'Other.' Furthermore, Said was a pioneer in showing the role of media discourse in shaping public opinion, and determining how readers/viewers see current events.

In *Orientalism*, Said (1979) demonstrates how a certain unrealistic, often exotic image of the East is created and perpetuated by many European and American writers. Such exoticism is also often accompanied by implications of the cultural inferiority of the Orient. The effect of this on readers is to alienate the Orient and foster feelings of superiority in the minds of Western readers. Furthermore in *Covering Islam*, Said (1981, 1997) exposes the role of the media in creating and perpetuating the image of Muslims, and particularly Arab Muslims, as terrorists. Muslim male youth, in particular, are given certain labels and described in such a way as to negatively impact the way they are seen by readers/viewers. The case is especially so when acts of violence have been committed by Muslim youth. Said points out how these 'discourse' tactics of labeling and classifying are not practiced when similar acts of violence are committed by other non-Muslims, as for example, members of the IRA. This is because any event that involves Islam immediately becomes highly politicized. Furthermore, he demonstrates how information regarding Muslims is often slanted, with certain aspects of a particular event concealed and others given undue emphasis. He cites many examples from media discourse to support his argument.

2.1.3 Investigation of Power and Dominance in Various Disciplines

As van Dijk (2001a) points out, the notion of power and dominance in various types of discourse has been investigated by many scholars, both in the field of linguistics and in other disciplines. The difference between CDA and previous studies on power is that outside the field of linguistics, in sociology for example, linguistic analysis is not systematic or theory based. Within the field of linguistics, the differences between CDA and other approaches, such as those within conversation analysis, discourse analysis and sociolinguistics, are that CDA has an explicitly stated political agenda, it aims to expose how illegitimate

dominance and hegemony is enacted and perpetuated by means of discourse, and typically sides with the dominated group. Or as Meyer (2001) puts it, "CDA scholars play an advocatory role for groups who suffer from social discrimination" (p. 15). But other research within linguistics makes no such claims and remains primarily academic, and purportedly objective.   In conclusion, it is important to note that CDA practitioners see their approach as a continuation in a line of critical research. They see that it both builds upon and makes use of previous and current research in related fields. To this end, in their joint publication entitled *Discourse in Late Modernity***,** Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) state: "CDA is best seen as one contributory element in research on social practices – in this sense, it should be seen as working in combination with other methods in social scientific research" (p. 16).

2.2 CDA: Theory, Method or Approach?
CD analysts are by no means monolithic in referring to the type of analysis in which they engage nor its nature. Some refer to it as a method while others insist that it is an approach. The second view comes mainly in response to the criticism leveled at CDA (particularly by Widdowson 1995, 1996, 2004) for not specifying a clear methodology. Others still give a confusing picture of the nature of CDA.

       Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) assert that they regard CDA as both theory *and* method. They state**:** "We see CDA as both theory and method: as a method for analysing social practices with particular regard to their discourse moments within the linking of the theoretical and practical concerns and public spheres" (p. 160). But it is not just one theory, but rather an interaction of theories. They elaborate on this saying:

> We see CDA as bringing a variety of theories into dialogue, especially
> social theories on the one hand and linguistic theories on the other, so that
> *its theory is a shifting synthesis of other theories* [italics added], though
> what it itself theorizes in particular is the mediation between the social and
> the linguistic – 'the order of discourse', the social structuring of semiotic
> hybridity, (interdiscursivity). (p.16)

Yet despite criticisms of CDA for not having a fixed method, and the acknowledgement of several practitioners of CDA   that a clearly spelled out method would be useful (Fowler, 1996; van Dijk, 2007), Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) still see that there is no need for one fixed method. In this regard they state:

> Given our emphasis on the mutually informing development of theory and
> method, we do not support calls for stabilizing a method for CDA (Fowler,
> 1996; Toolan, 1997) While such a stabilization would have institutional and
> especially pedagogical advantages, it would compromise the developing
> capacity of CDA to shed light on the dialectic and semiotic and the social in
> a wide variety of social practices by bringing to bear shifting sets of
> theoretical resources and shifting operationalizations of them. (p.17)

This, however, appears to be contradictory; how can CDA be *a theory*, but one that constantly changes , and how can it be *a method* when there is no unifying method.   What makes it more confusing for readers is that the apparent contradiction in Chouliaraki and Fairclough's writing reverberates elsewhere.

Michael Meyer, like Chouliarki and Fairclough, insists that CDA is grounded in theory, which is different from regarding it as a theory in itself. He states: "CDA in all its various forms understands itself to be strongly based in theory" (2001, p. 17). Yet it is not one particular theory, but a wide range of differing theories adopted by different analysts. He mentions for example Ron Scollon's "microsociological perspectives", the adoption of Michel Foucault's theories on society and power by some analysts such as Jager, Fairclough and Wodak, and van Dijk's use of theories of social cognition (Meyer, 2001, pp.17-18).

As such then, it would seem to be more realistic to regard CDA not as a theory in itself, but as an approach that is theory dependent. Furthermore, it is not dependent on one particular theory, but rather on any behavioral theory/theories that is/are considered appropriate in the investigation of the way language is used to create, perpetuate or legitimate a specific kind of social structure. Van Dijk (2001) elaborates on CDA's difference from other theories of discourse analysis saying: "CDA is not a direction, school, or specialization next to the many other approaches in discourse studies, rather it aims to offer a *different mode or perspective* [italics added] of theorizing, analysis and application throughout the whole field" (p. 352). On his website, addressing those who would like to learn CDA, van Dijk (2007) states that the initial step is to get rid of misconceptions regarding CDA (which he now prefers to refer to as Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)). Prime among these conceptions is the idea "that CDS is a method of analysis or research." Rather, he writes, "CDS is *an academic movement* [italics added] of a group of socially and politically committed scholars, or, more individually, a socially critical attitude of doing discourse studies"
(http://www.discourses.org/resources/teachyourself/unlelarn%20misconceptions.html.)

3. Representative Work in CDA

In the following section, I discuss two representative works in CDA by two of its major proponents and founders namely, Norman Fairclough, and Tuen van Dijk. Both are prolific writers and for the past three decades have dealt with the enactment of power via language and discourse (see Fairclough 1989/2001, 1995a, 2006 and van Dijk 1991, 1993, 1996, 2005). The recent political moves of globalization, and in the wake of 9/11, the preoccupation with international security and the threat of terrorism have motivated both to analyze political discourse. The speeches of former Prime Minister Tony Blair, in particular, have been the focus of a number of their works. This is because Blair is recognized as a political leader of a major influential European country whose political decisions have far reaching consequences. Furthermore, Blair is known to be a

vocal leader, and a charismatic speaker;[5] Fairclough (2005) describes him as "a major international statesman and *opinion-former* [italics added]" (p.11). And while the often-times more influential political role of the United States and its president is acknowledged, Blair's "contributions" to shaping international policy are certainly worthwhile examining.

3.1 Fairclough's Analysis of Blair's Speeches
In an intriguing article entitled "Blair's Contribution to Elaborating a New Doctrine of International Community'" Norman Fairclough (2005) analyzes extracts from a number of speeches delivered by former Prime Minister Tony Blair between 1999–2003. He argues that Blair contributes to the rise of hegemonic discourse, particularly in regards to international relations and security policies, and shows how his rhetoric changes quite noticeably from 1999 to 2003. More specifically, he finds that Blair's early speeches describe a status quo, and provide 'narratives' of actual changes taking place in the world. In his later speeches, on the other hand, he forcefully states what actions 'must' be taken by the international community (regarding international security), prescribes certain policies, and speculates about what may happen both in the near and distant future.

In his analysis of the speeches, Fairclough addresses a number of questions which shed light on how Blair discursively legitimizes military intervention in Iraq. The questions may be summarized as follows: first, what information is included in the speech and what is left out? Second, how are the 'complexities' of reality simplified, and generalized? Third, how are important issues presented? Fourth, what discourses are used to present such issues and which potential ones are avoided? And, what are the semantic, grammatical and lexical features of particular discourses, and how are they strung together? (Fairclough, 2005, pp. 3-4).

Fairclough finds a significant difference between Blair's speeches in 1999 and those delivered in 2003. For example, in his discussion of "world change" in the speech of April 1999, Blair refers to the impact of globalization on world economy. He states: "I believe the world has changed in a more fundamental way. Globalization has transformed our economies and our working practices" (Blair, 1999, cited in Fairclough, 2005, p. 4). Commenting on this statement Fairclough points to Blair's use of an abstract term, "globalization," to cover up specific, tangible processes. Moreover, he states that "themes associated with other discourses of globalization are absent – e.g. the increasing gap between rich and poor" (p.4). He also refers to another important theme which is often associated with globalization but is likewise absent in Blair's speech, and that is how globalization dilutes cultural diversity and even threatens indigenous cultures. Two themes that are given prominence in Blair's speech are: "(a) the global impact of local events … [and] (b) globalization as a threat rather than an opportunity" (p.4). The "local events" that Blair refers to are acts of violence or terrorist acts that occur outside Britain. A few years later, in April 2002, in another speech where he refers to world

change, Blair again refers to the effects of globalization, and the spread of the effects of local events to other parts of the world. However, this time, Fairclough notes that he does so with more force, and provides a tangible example, namely the events of 9/11. As a point of comparison Fairclough cites two analogous sentences:

> "Many of our domestic problems are caused on the other side of the world" (1999).
> "In truth it is rare today that trouble in one part of the globe remains limited in its effect" (2002). (Fairclough, 2005, p.5)

Fairclough comments on the differences between the two sentences saying that the first is a passive one that leaves unstated what it is, specifically, that leads to the "domestic problems.' The second is an active sentence with an explicitly stated agent; problems in a certain part of the globe that spread to other parts are referred to as "trouble." Fairclough observes that the word "trouble" is widely used in the media in Britain to refer to "industrial disputes or sectarian violence in Northern Ireland" and, he adds, the word "trouble" belongs to a category that "suggests that the forces of law and order are needed." More importantly, "it is threats to security, rather than economic threats, that are accentuated in the speech of 2002" (p. 5).

It seems to me, however, that Fairclough's argument regarding the associations made with word "trouble" is rather weak. While the speech is essentially delivered to the British people, Blair no doubt knows that his speeches are listened to world wide, or at least by Americans and Europeans. It does not seem quite likely that the association of "trouble" with IRA and the need for "forces of law and order" (p. 5) would necessarily come to the minds of everyone. For the British, perhaps, the word "trouble" may connote forceful intervention. Nevertheless, in general, as Fairclough remarks, the 2002 speech does emphasize the impact of globalization on security and pushes for intervention as can also be seen in the following additional lines from the extract, provided in the appendix of the paper but not quoted in Fairclough's analysis. Blair states:

> So today more than ever, "their" problem becomes "our" problem. Instability is contagious. … September 11 is the international recognition that the world needs order.
>
>   …
> So the promotion of these values [freedom, democracy and justice], becomes not just right in itself but part of our long-term security and prosperity. We can't intervene in every case. Not all the wrongs of the world can be put right, but where disorder threatens us all, *we should act* [italics added]. (Blair, 2002 cited in Fairclough, 2005, p.16, the appendix.)

Comparing Blair's discussion of international security in April 1999 with that in April 2002, Fairclough finds an escalation in the reference to threats posed by events in other parts of the world, and consequently the implication that there is a more pressing need to intervene militarily to deal with these events.

Fairclough also notes how in the speech of April 1999, Blair makes a binary division of the world into "protagonists … and antagonists" with the British (and their allies) presumed to be the protagonists and Saddam Hussein and Milosovic, in one camp, assumed to be the antagonists who "terrorize their own people and threaten international security" (pp. 5-6).   The antagonists are explicitly described in numerous negative terms, or what Fairclough describes as "a sort of lexical 'overkill'" (p. 6).   In the speech of April 2002, the threat of the antagonists to international security is further heightened and new associations are made with them. Fairclough notes a marked change in post 9/11 discourse, with "the constitution of a relation of equivalence between 'terrorism' and 'weapons of mass destruction' as co-members in the class of threats. Terrorism and/or weapons of mass destruction … become a high frequency collocation" (p. 6). This, he further notes, is one of the many discursive strategies that have been used to legitimate the expansion of the war on terrorism. Voicing the left-wing opposition, Fairclough interestingly notes:

> Of course weapons of mass destruction are only a threat in the hands of the 'bad guys' – 'our' weapons of mass destruction are not alluded to. (Perhaps the widely used acronym WMD helps in narrowing the focus of 'bad' weapons of mass destruction.) (Fairclough, 2005, p. 6.)

Fairclough also differentiates between Blair's "narrative" of actual international security, and what he imagines it to be. He maintains that the spread of values which Blair calls for in both the 1999 and 2002 speeches is in fact tantamount to "cultural imperialism." In the 1999 speech Blair "[proposes] … 'establishing' and crucially 'spreading' values as a strategy for achieving security" (p.8). Fairclough argues that the "values" Blair wishes to spread are no doubt Western values which are not necessarily shared by others. In a later speech (January 2003) Blair refers to these values as "universal" values. Fairclough contends that calling for the spread of "universal values" is in fact contradictory; if these values are indeed universal, why would there be a need to spread them? The values that Blair refers to are "liberty, the rule of law, human rights and an open society" (Blair, 1999 cited in Fairclough, 2005, p.8). Fairclough maintains that while the words themselves may be "common" the concepts themselves are not; thus for example, he argues, "the 'freedom' or 'liberty' celebrated on the right and now centre-left in the USA and Britain might be perceived as selfishness and self-indulgence by many Muslims" (p. 9). As such then the world-wide acceptance of Western values should not be regarded as given. Fairclough is quite right. A case in point is the Danish newspapers' publication of cartoons offensive to Muslims. The Danish and many Europeans claim that they simply regard this as freedom of the press. Muslims and many European intellectuals, however, do not see it in this light at all, and indeed do regard it as "selfishness and self-indulgence" and outright antagonism to Muslims.

The need to defend Western values is more vehemently stated in the speech of April 2002, where Blair openly states his belief in the possibility of intervention to defend the principles of his society. He states:

> I advocate an enlightened self-interest that puts *fighting* [italics added] for our values right at the heart of the policies necessary to protect our nations. (Blair, 2002, cited in Fairclough, 2005, p. 9)
> I am arguing that the values we believe in *are worth fighting for* [italics added]; they are in the ascendant and we have a common interest in standing up for them. We shouldn't be shy of giving our actions not just the force of self-interest but moral force. (Blair, 2002, cited in Fairclough, 2005, p. 9)

Commenting on Blair's speech, Fairclough sees that "the claim to 'moral force' in 2002 is based more on combative assertion ('fighting for,' 'standing up for') of 'our' values than in the 1999 speech" (p. 9).

Fairclough's analysis highlights the difference in stance in the two speeches, and definitely the latter speech is much more compelling in, first of all, heightening the threat posed by others to the security of the UK and the whole world, and second, in putting forward military intervention as expressed in the phrase "fighting for". One, however, is less reluctant to agree with Fairclough that the phrase 'stand up for' is "combative." The idiomatic phrase may also mean to *morally* support or back a cause, issue or person. Elsewhere in his speech, Blair points to the moral obligations of Britain, where an important consideration in international affairs is "the respect for others" [and the attempt "to create a better world" (p. 15). The emphasis on the British's 'good' moral values can be seen in the light of what van Dijk (2006) (discussed below) describes as a general strategy of positive self-presentation.

3.2.0 Tuen van Dijk: Discourse and Manipulation
In his article "Discourse and Manipulation," van Dijk (2006) provides a theoretical interface for the notion of "manipulation," a notion he considers critical for CDA. From the outset, he differentiates between manipulation in the scientific sense, as used in scientific studies, and manipulation as "a form of interaction, such as politicians or the media manipulating voters or readers,… through some kind of discursive influence" (p.360). Using triangulation as a research tool, he investigates manipulation within a framework that espouses a social, a cognitive, and a discourse analytic approach. He adopts a triangulated approach because he sees that most manipulation involves at least three aspects: since manipulation generally involves asymmetrical power relations between participants, then a social perspective on manipulation is required. Also, since it seeks to influence the way a person or a community thinks by working on their mind processes, then a cognitive approach is needed. Furthermore, and most importantly, it is enacted via discourse, whether spoken, written, or semiotic, hence a discourse analytic approach is needed. In resorting to three disciplines of research to analyze manipulation, he demonstrates what he has continued to advocate in much of his writing, namely, the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to explain complex linguistic phenomena, such as manipulative discourse.

The bulk of van Dijk's paper is dedicated to outlining how the theories behind the three approaches, the social, the cognitive and the discourse analytic can be drawn upon to analyze manipulation. This is followed by an application of this interdisciplinary framework to the analysis of extracts of a speech delivered by the Prime Minister of the UK, Tony Blair, in March 2003, to the House of Commons. In this speech and the debate within it, he attempts to legitimize his government's decision to support the US and participate in the invasion of Iraq. The speech later came to be cited as an example of manipulation, and would lead, along with other similar speeches, to accusing Blair of lying to his people about facts related to the invasion of Iraq (see van Dijk, 2006, pp. 377-380).

3.2.1 Social Context and Manipulation

Van Dijk first points to the importance of studying the social context in which manipulation takes place, and to the importance of distinguishing between manipulation and influence. The former differs from the latter in that it is always to the advantage of the producer rather than the recipient, and that it may involve illegitimate means of mind control. He also points out that a person who is able to influence or manipulate others must have certain personal and social characteristics. Setting aside the personal qualities, he focuses on the social criteria.

Of prime importance in the social conditions for effective manipulation of others is the social status of the manipulator. Van Dijk points out that manipulation often comes from the more powerful to the less powerful, from the dominant to the dominated. Among the factors that define the power of a person/group are "group membership, institutional position, profession, material or symbolic resources" (van Dijk, 2006, p. 362). Parents, professors, politicians and journalists and religious leaders are examples he gives of individuals who are in a social position to manipulate others. (Yet these individuals may also be manipulated by their children, students, and so on in the form of opposition or rebellion.)

Van Dijk also points out that manipulators often exercise social dominance over others, or abuse their power. This, he says, may take on many forms, most important of which for group manipulation is control of symbolic scarce resources such as the mass media and public discourse. (See Bourdieu's views in this respect, (Bourdieu, 1992, 1999)). Van Dijk states that mass media and public discourse is a precious resource monopolized by a limited few. He contends that control of the media and public discourse both depends on, constitutes, and reaffirms the power and domination of certain groups over others, and thus becomes a way of (re)producing inequality in society. In saying so, van Dijk reiterates the concept of discourse in CDA as not only a means of communication or expression, but as social practice in itself. He then defines manipulation from a social perspective saying that "manipulation socially speaking is a discursive form of elite power reproduction that is against the best interest of dominated groups and (re)produces social inequality" (van Dijk, 2006, p. 364).

3.2.2 The Cognitive Aspect of Manipulation

After discussing the social aspects of manipulation, van Dijk moves on to the cognitive dimension. He states that manipulation always involves some form of mind control; its aim is to direct recipients' beliefs, ideologies and opinions, and consequently affect their behavior. He again differentiates between manipulation and legitimate forms of mind management and influence in general, the former being "in the best interest of one party, and against the best interest of the recipients" (p.363). He points to a number of cognitive studies that deal with the effect of contextual and textual manipulation on understanding. He then goes on to show how manipulative discourse generally involves short term memory (STM).   Processing in STM is usually "on-line, goal-directed, operating at various levels of discourse structure, and hypothetical: fast and efficient guesses and shortcuts are made instead of complete analyses" (van Dijk, 2006, p. 365).

He points to certain strategies used in manipulative discourse as for example printing texts in a certain way as to make them more prominent by using distinctive fonts, either large or bold, and headlining or other positioning of a text to make it more noticeable for the reader. Such layout of a text would have the effect of making the reader process it in more detail, store it more effectively in STM and better able to recall it. It also prompts readers to attend to certain information within the text, despite the fact that this information may not be the most salient about a certain topic. And this is what may differentiate manipulative texts from other non manipulative texts that rely on headlining and other visual enhancements of a text as a cognitive aspect of discourse processing. A non-manipulative text would headline or write in bold, large font what is indeed important.   On the other hand, a manipulative text would highlight irrelevant information or information of secondary importance, and conceal or omit essential information. Such slanted presentation of facts would no doubt lead to misunderstanding on the part of recipients. Furthermore, limiting the recipients' access to important facts results in an incomplete picture of important issues.

In spoken discourse, manipulation involves phonetic and phonological aspects of a text in addition to the morphological, syntactic and lexical features. Van Dijk points out that efficient processing in STM would be enhanced by clear, slow pronunciation, simple syntactic structures and lexicon. Furthermore, topic familiarity plays an important role in effective processing. When manipulative speakers wish to hinder recipients' understanding, they would do the opposite: speak quickly, use complex syntactic structures and unfamiliar lexicon, and obfuscate the topic.

Van Dijk further contends that in addition to operating on STM, manipulators operate on long term, episodic memory. Episodic memory, in turn, is dependent on the creation of certain mental models which influence the way we receive and store knowledge and, more importantly, help form our attitudes and ideologies. Because of the importance of mental models for general processing of information, manipulators often seek to influence them, so that recipients will see events and process discourse in the way that manipulators desire. More

importantly, as van Dijk states, "the strategy is to discursively emphasize those properties of models that are consistent with our interests (e,g details of our good deeds) and discursively de-emphasize those properties that are inconsistent with our interests (e.g. details of our bad deeds)" (2006, p. 367- 368). He goes on to state how another common strategy is that of "blaming the victim" (p. 368). All these strategies generally operate discreetly and are rarely observed by the general public.

Manipulating how the public perceives and reacts to major events which have far reaching consequences is of prime importance for government elites. A case in point is the events of 9/11. The way these events are described, explained and commented upon determines the mental model that the general public creates for them. More importantly, however, the discourse concerning these events does not only create preferred mental models, but rather "[focuses] … on more general and abstract beliefs such as knowledge, attitudes and ideologies" (van Dijk, 2006, p. 368). The aim is not to influence individuals but rather groups of people.

Van Dijk proceeds to show how certain discourse strategies are used to direct the beliefs of large social groups. One of these strategies is "generalization." As van Dijk explains, "generalization, in which case a concrete specific example that has made an impact on people's mental models, is generalized to more general knowledge or attitudes, or even fundamental ideologies" (van Dijk 2006, p. 370). As an example, he cites the events of 9/11 and how they were generalized to manipulate not only the opinions of US citizens regarding terrorism, but also the opinions of the whole world. He describes such manipulation as "abuse of power" (p. 370).[6] This swaying of world opinion, he goes on to say, was generally achieved by the help of the mass media and reflects certain cognitive mechanisms of manipulation, which can be summarized as follows:

- The use of a very moving poignant event to control mental models and polarize the world into two camps "Us (good, innocent) and Them (evil, guilty). (p. 370)
- "repeated messages and exploitation of related events … to build an anti terrorist ideology" (p. 370). Typically the real interests and agendas of the government are concealed and supposed gains for the nation are made prominent.

3.3.3   Discourse and Manipulation

The analysis of discourse is of paramount importance in studying manipulation as most manipulation is verbal. Van Dijk points out that manipulation cannot be an inherent characteristic of certain discourse in and of itself. Rather, it depends on the context; the same discourse may be manipulative in a certain situation, but persuasive in another, depending on the social context and the power relations between the producer and recipient. Thus he believes that discourse should be analyzed "in terms of [its] context categories, rather than in terms of [its] textual structure" (p. 372).   And, while one may not point out a specific

linguistic structure as being manipulative in itself, a certain linguistic/textual structure may be more effective in manipulation than another. Thus for example headlines are generally employed to highlight topics or other salient information. In manipulation, headlines may be used to give undue emphasis to certain information, as for example to highlight negative aspects of particular groups and individuals whom the dominant group is against, and to simultaneously divert attention from other important information for the recipient, but which may disclose negative characteristics of the dominant group.

In fact, van Dijk sees that this strategy of "positive self-presentation" and "negative other-presentation" as most typical of manipulative discourse and operating on many levels of discourse, macro and micro. He then delineates the specific discourse strategies used to give partial accounts of events. On the macro-level, we find the employment of speech acts such as accusations, and defense, with emphasis on the good attributes and deeds of the manipulators and on the bad attributes and deeds of the Other. Another macro-strategy is what van Dijk refers to as "semantic macrostructures" such as topic selection, where we typically find the selection of topics that emphasize the positive aspects of the manipulators and deemphasize the negative aspects, while doing the opposite for the Other. The topic is supported "locally" by providing examples and many details to highlight the positive aspects of the producer, and few details regarding any negative aspects. To the same effect, vagueness and implicitness are other textual strategies employed to cover negative aspects. On the other hand, few details are given about the Other's positive attributes, while many examples and details regarding negative aspects are provided. Similarly, vagueness and euphemism are employed regarding any negative aspect that concerns manipulators, but when it comes to discussing negative aspects regarding the Other, the manipulators are very precise. Other strategies van Dijk mentions are the employment of positive lexicon, hyperbole and metaphors that emphasize the positive aspects of the manipulator, while negative lexicon and metaphorical language is used to stress the negative aspects of the Other.

The overall aim of these strategies is to "polarize" groups and build an ideology whereby the Other is seen as totally different, and of course inferior and evil in nature. Such was the case with post 9/11 discourse. van Dijk (2006) points out how a traumatized and vulnerable nation was inundated with "anti-terrorist, anti-Islam [sic], anti-Arab and racist ideologies … emphasizing the evil nature of terrorists, and the freedom and democratic principles of the 'civilized' nations" (p. 374).[7]

Manipulative discourse, however, is further distinguished from other ideological discourse and, according to van Dijk, is distinguished by other preferred strategies in addition to those mentioned above. An example of such strategies is the propagation of certain fallacies, as for example citing authoritative religious figures or texts to legitimate certain actions. In general, he sees that recipients of manipulation are generally victims who "[lack] crucial resources to resist, detect, or avoid manipulation" (375). Thus they typically lack important information to help them oppose manipulation, and are generally in a

lower social position than that of their manipulators, because as van Dijk had noted earlier, manipulation usually comes from those of higher power to those of lower power. Furthermore, manipulators present fundamental norms or values that are hard to refute. They also take advantage of disturbing, shocking, and emotional events that make people more vulnerable. A necessary supporting establishment is the mass media, which generally voices elite discourse, and provides little space, if any, for counter discourses. As an example of this, van Dijk cites the US led war in Iraq. Manipulation, however, does not always succeed. This is especially so when counter-arguments are given space in the mass media, and when dissidents gain power and manage to resist dominant or manipulative discourse.

Van Dijk concludes his paper with an analysis of two extracts of a speech delivered in March 2003 to the House of Commons, by the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Tony Blair. In the speech Blair attempts to rationalize his attempts to side with President George Bush and send British troops to invade Iraq. Van Dijk describes the speech as one "that has attracted much attention in the press as well as from academic analysts … [and] an example of well-known manipulative discourse" (van Dijk, 2006, p. 377).

The aspects of manipulative discourse that van Dijk finds in the first short extract are: first, "ideological polarization" with the US and the British represented as Democracies and the Other, the Iraqis as Dictatorships. This is seen in Blair's statement:

> I say that it is right that the House debate this issue and pass judgment.
> That is the democracy that is our right, but that others struggle for in vain.
> (Blair, 2003, cited in van Dijk, 2006, p. 377.)

Second, is "positive self-presentation," by virtue of the fact that the US and Britain are democracies, but also as van Dijk states in "allowing debate and [having] respect for other opinions" (p. 378). This can be seen in   Blair statement: "I do not disrespect the views in opposition to mine" (cited in van Dijk, 2006, p. 377).   Third, Blair emphasizes his power as Prime Minister. Fourth, he "discredits his opponents" by referring to the opposition party of the Liberal Democrats as "unified … in opportunism and error" (p. 377). Fifth, Blair emotionalizes the issue by saying "I believe *passionately* [italics added] that we must hold firm to that course" (p. 377). Thus van Dijk concludes that the first extract of Blair's speech is indeed full of strategies typical of manipulative discourse.

The second extract that van Dijk analyses continues along the same lines of positive self-presentation, and negative Other-presentation but also uses rhetorical devices such as litotes and hyperbole to emphasize the evilness of the Other. It is further characterized by extending group membership of the "good" group to include not just the US and Britain but also all of Europe. This is reflected in the following part of Blair's speech, where he refers to the importance of the decision the House will make:

> It will determine the way in which Britain and the rest of the world confront the central security threat of the 21st century, the development of the United Nations, the relationship between Europe and the United States, the relations with the European Union and the way in which the United States engages with the rest of the world. So it could hardly be more important. It will determine the pattern of international politics for the next generation. (Blair, 2003, cited in van Dijk, 2006, p. 378)

Van Dijk sees that this extract is even more manipulative than the first as it widens the scope of the conflict between good and evil and makes it an international one, and by doing so makes the decision to send troops even more critical as the US and Britain are defending the whole world from the threat of Saddam. Furthermore, van Dijk notes that the hyperbolic expression "for the next generation" underscores the seriousness of the decision and the weight put upon the House.

Van Dijk notes that the rest of the speech, which he does not analyze in detail in the paper, is full of other manipulative devices. For example Blair continues to "[emphasize his] own power and moral superiority" (p. 379) and to provide details that show the evilness of the 'enemy,' Saddam Hussein. But as van Dijk observes, Members of Parliament are not easy to beguile, nor are they "powerless victims", and thus it may be argued that the speech is an example of persuasion rather than manipulation. However, he points out, MPs are actually less powerful than the Prime Minister in a certain aspect and that is their inadequate knowledge regarding issues such as the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and other information from secret services. Another important point is the context in which the speech takes place: a cabinet member had already resigned over Blair's support of US policy in Iraq, and the few politicians who opposed the war risked losing their jobs. Furthermore, the way the speech is phrased makes it difficult for a member to state that he does not want to support the troops as this would sound unpatriotic. Moreover, not supporting the invasion is made to appear as if it were support for the dictatorship regime of Saddam Hussein. Thus, van Dijk concludes that the speech is not just mere persuasion and, taking the contextual details into account, it is in fact manipulative discourse.

Van Dijk's article is significant in that it provides the theoretical basis that is seen to be lacking in much work in CDA (see Toolan, 1999). Furthermore, by using triangulation, he shows how discourse is multifaceted and complex and how any analysis of discourse is enriched by referring to the multiple factors at work in producing it, both textually and contextually. While his article would have been richer and more interesting by a more extensive analysis of Blair's speech (the bulk of the paper (18 pages) goes to expounding the theoretical interface of manipulation, whereas only the last four pages are dedicated to the analysis of the speech), it is, nevertheless, very interesting and the analysis does indeed show how discourse can be manipulative. Also, he provides the necessary contextual background information needed to analyze the

texts. Still, a point of criticism remains, and that is van Dijk's neglect to justify the choice of the two particular extracts of the speech he examines.

4. Merits of CDA

The contributions of CDA to discourse analysis are many. Widdowson himself, despite his recurrent, unrelenting criticism of CDA (Widdowson, 1995, 1996, 2004), acknowledges the important and noble work of CDA practitioners in exposing the covert agendas of those in power and their manipulation of the minds of the general public to their own advantage, yet to the detriment of public/world interest. Reiterating his endorsement of the *cause* of CDA, he states:

> The need to demonstrate how discourse analysis can contribute to a critical awareness of the ways in which language is used and abused to exercise control and practice deception remains as pressing as ever. CDA to its great credit has alerted us to this need ... I recognize too that it has the effect of giving point and purpose to discourse analysis by giving prominence to crucial questions about its socio-political significance which otherwise might have been marginalized. (Widdowson, 2004, p. ix)

Such a contribution comes at a time of world-wide political unrest, and an era in which a few world leaders impose their decisions on their often-times unsuspecting citizens, and on the rest of the world. The most pressing example of such decisions is, of course, that made by the United States Administration to invade Iraq, using false pretexts to persuade the nation and recruit allies. Such pervasive misinformation is made possible due to control of the mass media by those in power (see Bourdieu, 1999). Because the consequences of the decisions of these leaders, namely Bush and Blair, are both grave and far-reaching, many academics feel pressed to take political action, even if only verbal, rather than remain bystanders.[8]

Furthermore, the main proponents of CDA are generally credited in the field with showing how dominant narratives, or so called master narratives, play an important role in shaping the ideologies of communities, and also in showing how these dominant discourses are resisted, either with counter narratives or by simply deconstructing such narratives and exposing how ideological manipulation takes place. The influence of CDA in this respect is so widely recognized, that in her review of the volume *Counter-narratives: Narrating, Resisting, Making Sense*, Daniele Klapproth (2006, p. 684) criticizes the authors, Michael Bamberg and Molly Andrews, for failing to mention the perspectives and contributions of van Dijk and Fairclough in exposing the social effects of dominant discourses and how they can be resisted.

Another important contribution of CDA is its interdisciplinary nature, drawing together research from different disciplines and utilizing it in the analysis of discourse, thereby enriching the analysis of texts and the field of discourse analysis itself. Language is a crucial aspect of our lives, and one that is fundamental to all our activities. Our concept of language, how we use it, and it

how it functions in everyday life is certainly influenced by current findings in other related disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, cognitive psychology and media discourse.   Proponents of CDA are to be credited with bringing together the findings of research in these fields to augment and give weight to their analyses, and open up new interpretations of discourse. Yet another important contribution of CDA is that has made discourse analysis of service to the non-specialized, i.e. to those outside the realm of linguistic research and academia in general.

5. Criticism of CDA and Counter-arguments
From the outset, CDA has given rise to much criticism. The most vocal critic, perhaps, has been Henry Widdowson whose arguments against CDA have been articulated in a number of his works (see for example, Widdowson 1995, 1996, 2004), and responded to at length by Fairclough (Fairclough, 1996) and also by others (see for example, Weber, 2002). Other criticism has come from stylistics and from conversation analysis.

Widdowson (1995, 2004) takes CDA to task on a number of issues, too many to be handled in this paper. Beginning with the lack of distinction between the two terms 'discourse' and 'text', he states that the use of the term discourse is both "in vogue and vague" (Widdowson, 1995, p. 158), rapidly increasing in popularity without its users really knowing to what it refers or distinguishing it from the term 'text.' What had been previously practiced under the label of text analysis has changed its label but not its scope. Thus he believes that there is "a good deal of conceptual confusion" in the field (Widdowson, 1995, p. 157).

Second, Widdowson criticizes CD analysts for interpreting discourse rather than objectively analyzing it. Interpretation as such would be contradictory to the label given to the approach as "critical" discourse analysis. Because practitioners of CDA embark on their analyses with a political agenda, he believes that they are inevitably biased. Widdowson argues that CD analysts' ideological stance leads them to "derive from the text the discourse which fits their preconceived ideological commitment. … It presents a partial interpretation of text from a particular point of view" (Widdowson, 1995, p.169). Rather than providing a thorough investigation of all aspects of a text, CDA analysts selectively analyze only certain linguistic aspects, chosen to prove their points, suggesting that no other interpretation is possible.   Due to this, he finds that their work is not objective analysis, but in fact interpretation, quite similar to literary criticism. This he sees as the result of the analysts' confusion of 'scope' of analysis, the phenomena that is analyzed, and political commitment.

Another point of criticism of CDA is the absence of a linguistic framework within which the analysis takes place. This is recognized not only by critics of CDA, but by practitioners of CDA themselves, as for example Roger Fowler who calls for a "standardization of the method and its metalanguage" (1996, p. 12, cited in Toolan, 1997, p. 99). Micheal Toolan, the stylistician, agrees with Fowler and points to the absence of a certain fixed method as one of the drawbacks of CDA.[9]   He sees that the multiplicity of methods adopted by

the practitioners is confusing for outsiders. Likewise, Widdowson (2004) criticizes Fairclough for claiming to use Halliday's systemic functional grammar (the original methodology adopted in the early work of CDA) as a basic framework of analysis, when in fact he does not do so. In the absence of a clearly stated framework, Widdowson argues, the analysis is not systematic nor principled (see Widdowson, 2004, pp. 109-110). Furthermore, it makes it difficult for students of linguistics (or other related disciplines) to do their own critical analysis of discourse. As such then, the approach remains confined to those who are experienced in linguistic analysis.

In a reply to Henry Widdowson, Fairclough (1996) argues that Widdowson has not accurately represented his work. To begin with he asserts that he does differentiate between meaning and discourse, and that his distinction is, in fact, similar to that made by Widdowson himself. Second, regarding the criticism that CDA is no more than interpretation, and one that excludes the possibility of others, Fairclough argues that any analysis of language must involve interpretation of meaning, even the process of understanding everyday language involves interpretation. Yet, he categorically refutes Widdowson's criticism that CDA leaves no room for alternative interpretations by quoting from his own earlier work, in which he asserts:

> *texts may be open to different interpretations* [italics added] depending on the context and interpreter, which means that social meanings (including ideologies) of discourse cannot simply be read off from the text without considering patterns and variations in the social distribution, consumption and interpretation of text. (Fairclough, 1992, p. 28, cited in Fariclough, 1996, p. 50)

Fairclough emphasizes that he has always believed in the plurality of meaning latent in texts. He then addresses the point taken against CDA practitioners for being biased due to their political commitment. He maintains that while it so happens that the ideological commitment of most CDA practitioners is left-wing, "a CDA of the right is quite conceivable, directed for instance at left-wing or feminist texts" (p. 52). Moreover, he points to a difference in the way both CDA and Widdowson use the term 'ideology.' He contends that for Widdowson, ideology means a certain political stance or commitment, but for CDA, ideology is used "in the sense of assumptions which are built into practices … which sustain relations of domination, usually in a covert way" (p.52). Fairclough also argues that analysts may have undisclosed political stances which no doubt affect their work, but CDA is transparent in that its political commitment is overtly stated.

Apparently bearing in mind the criticism directed at CDA, van Dijk has become more theory oriented in his recent work, as for example in his article on discourse and manipulation discussed above. This article also indirectly responds to the criticism aimed at CDA for not specifying the steps followed in analyzing discourse. In his analysis of Blair's speech, van Dijk outlines specific steps; first, he identifies the strategies typical of manipulative discourse (as

derived from the three theories on which he relies), then shows how they do indeed occur in Blair's speech. He thus provides clear guidelines for students/analysts who may want to replicate such a study.

On a different note, the renowned conversation analyst, Emanuel Schegloff (1998), criticizes CDA for failing to make a detailed analysis of the contextual surrounding of the discourse analyzed along the lines of conversation analysis. (Conversational analysts generally begin with a detailed description of the "local construction" of an interaction.) In the absence of such a detailed account, the analysis ends up being ideological. He suggests that a detailed description of the context akin to what is done in conversation analysis is necessary prior to CDA.

Schegloff's criticism is warranted; indeed contextual information is important in linguistic analysis of face to face interaction. The details to which conversation analysts typically attend are: gestures, posture of speakers, alignment of speakers to one another, eye contact, gaze, interruptions, silence, overlaps and so on. In addition to this the participants are described in detail, their gender, their relationship to one another etc. (See the work of C. Goodwin, M.H. Goodwin, Pomerantz and Schegloff for example.) Yet two issues are important here. First: not all CDA focuses on conversation. The discourse analyzed may be a written text, a speech, an advertisement or commercial, or any type of semiosis, thus an analysis along the lines of conversation analysis would not always apply. Second, in the case of data that is similar to spontaneous conversation as for example a press conference or face to face interaction the kind of details that conversation analysis takes into account would indeed enhance the analysis. However, CDA is in fact ideological, and seeks to focus on those aspects of the discourse that expose an ideology of dominance and hegemony. In my view, while the addition of contextual analysis along the lines of conversation analysis would certainly provide an additional interesting dimension to the discourse being analyzed, the absence of such an analysis in CDA does not detract from its worth. Discourse is so rich and multifaceted that it is always possible to attend to a new detail, and examine it from a new perspective. Nevertheless, that does not mean that CDA practitioners have to discuss the data from every single conceivable angle.

6. Conclusion

Despite the criticism leveled at it, CDA has contributed much to discourse analysis, as even those who criticize it acknowledge (see Widdowson, 1996, 2004; Toolan, 1997). Its merits certainly outweigh its shortcomings. The fact that it has made discourse analysis relevant to ongoing events, and a tool to expose various forms of domination, hegemony, discrimination and marginalization is in itself a worthwhile achievement. CDA practitioners who have analyzed current media discourse and the discourse of world leaders have effectively demonstrated the role of discourse in shaping world opinion, legitimizing the ongoing war on terror and concealing its devastating effects. The analysis of media discourse in Europe and the discourse of certain elites has

exposed the various ways in which negative stereo-typical images of ethnic and other marginalized groups are created and perpetuated. But more importantly, CDA has encouraged the propagation of counter-discourses. Furthermore, while the absence of a specific framework does indeed make it difficult for the inexperienced analyst, this is compensated for by the flexibility of its proponents in calling for the adoption of any linguistic theory that would shed light on the specifics of the text under study. And finally, its call for interdisciplinarity is indeed appealing, as linguistic analysis can be enriched by referring to other related fields.

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[2] Brown and Yule (1983) point out that this division "[corresponds] to the functional dichotomies - 'representative/expressive', found in Buhler (1934), 'referential / emotive' (Jakobson, 1960), 'ideational / interpersonal' (Halliday, 1970b), and 'descriptive / social-expressive' (Lyons, 1977)" (p.1).

[3] For a discussion of research on power in various types of discourse, see van Dijk 2001, pp.358-363.

[4] See Ruben Chuaqui's (2005) article "Notes on Edward Said's view of Michel Foucault."

[5] Reporting on a poll of British adults interviewed by phone between April 24-26, 2005, Alan Travis, the Guardian's home affairs editor, reports that Blair is seen as "[having] the charisma required of a prime minister." On a more negative note, he is also seen as "fairly slippery and not to be trusted." Retrieved May 15, 2008 from, http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2005/apr/28/polls.labour

[6] Van Dijk cites various works on manipulation of public opinion after 9/11 such as Ahmed, 2005; Chomsky, 2004; Halliday, 2002; and others.

[7] A special issue of *Discourse and Society*, 15 (3-4), 2004 focuses on the 9/11 discourses. Detailed analyses has shown that much of this discourse was indeed ideological (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 374).

[8] Consider for example the statements made by the renowned British playwright Harold Pinter in a television interview with Riz Khan on Al Jazeera International (November 16th, 2007) on its second day of launching. Responding to a question regarding his political activism he stated: "the old concept of art being an ivory tower is long gone… we don't live in a vacuum; we certainly don't live in an artistic vacuum. We live in a very harsh, hard, tough world which is outside our doors or even inside our homes." And due to this reality which is difficult for any intellectual to ignore, he sees that political issues must be a part of any "serious body of work."

[9] Toolan's article "What is Critical Discourse Analysis and Why are People Saying Such Terrible Things about it" (Toolan, 1997) provides a lengthy criticism of CDA. The article raises a number of interesting points, without being clouded by opposition to the approach. Toolan states (under the catchy side-heading: CDA? I love it!) that he is "very much more in favour of CDA than against it" (p. 83), then proceeds to enumerate problems with the approach.