4 Genres and generic structure

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Genres are the specifically discoursal aspect of ways of acting and interacting in the course of social events: we might say that (inter)acting is never just discourse, but it is often mainly discourse. So when we analyse a text or interaction in terms of genre, we are asking how it figures within and contributes to social action and interaction in social events – especially, given the orientation of this book, within the transformations associated with new capitalism. I have already discussed certain aspects of genres in chapter 2. Let me repeat the summary of that discussion:

1 The forms of action and interaction in social events are defined by its social practices and the ways in which they are networked together.
2 The social transformations of new capitalism can be seen as changes in the networking of social practices, and so change in the forms of action and interaction, which includes change in genres. Genre change is an important part of the transformations of new capitalism.
3 Some genres are relatively 'local' in scale, associated with relatively delimited networks of social practices (e.g. within an organization such as a business). Others are specialized for relatively 'global' (inter)action across networks (genres of 'governance').
4 Change in genres is change in how different genres are combined together. New genres develop through combination of existing genres.
5 A chain of events may involve a chain or network of different, interconnected texts which manifest a 'chain' of different genres.
6 A particular text or interaction is not 'in' a particular genre – it is likely to involve a combination of different genres.

We can conclude from points 5 and 6 that genre analysis proceeds as follows:

(a) analysis of 'genre chains';
(b) analysis of genre mixtures in a particular text;
(c) analysis of individual genres in a particular text.

The focus in this chapter is on the latter. On genres see: Bakhtin (1986a), Bazerman (1988), Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, Eggins and Martin (1997), Martin (1992), Swales (1990).

Let me make two preliminary points about genre. First, genres vary quite considerably in terms of their degree of stabilization, fixity and homogenization. Some genres, for instance the genre of the research paper in certain areas of science (Swales 1990), are well-defined almost to the point of being ritualized. Others, for example, advertisements for academic posts, are quite variable and in flux. In this period of rapid and profound social transformation, there is a tension between pressures towards stabilization, part of the consolidation of the new social order (for example, the new genres of telemarketing – see below), and pressures towards flux and change.

Second, there is no established terminology for genres. Some genres have fairly well-established names within the social practices in which they are used, others do not. Even where there are well established names, we should treat them with caution, because the classification schemes upon which they are based may give a misleading picture of what actually goes on. For instance, the term 'seminar' as used now not only in education but in business covers a variety of activities and genres.

Genres and texts

The general approach I am adopting in the book is to see the interdiscursive character of a text (the particular mix of genres, discourses and styles) as realized in semantic, grammatical and lexical (vocabulary) features of the text at various levels of text organization. Genres are realized in actional meanings and forms of a text, discourses in representational meanings and forms, and styles in identificational meanings and forms (see chapter 2 for these three main types of meaning and form in texts). This means that particular semantic relations or grammatical categories and relations will be seen as primarily associated with either genres, or discourses, or styles. 'Primarily', because there is not a simple one-to-one relation – so for instance modality will be seen as primarily associated with styles, but also germane to genres and discourses (see chapter 10). Recall the discussion in chapter 2 of the dialectical nature of the relations between the three aspects of meaning, and genres, discourses and styles.

There are various aspects of text organization and various features of texts at different levels which are primarily shaped by and dependent upon genre. We can summarize these as follows. I have indicated which chapters deal with which issues.

The overall ('generic') structure or organization of a text (chapter 4)
Semantic (logical, temporal etc.) relations between clauses and sentences, and over larger stretches of text (chapter 5)
Formal, including grammatical, relations between sentences and clauses (chapter 5)
At the level of the clause (simple sentence), types of exchange, speech function, mood (chapter 6)
The mode of intertextuality of a text, the way in which other texts and voices are incorporated (chapter 4)

This chapter will connect analysis of genres to a number of themes in social research. The first theme is Giddens' analysis (1991) of globalization as involving the **disembedding** of social material from particular social contexts and practices, so that it becomes available across different fields and scales as what one might call 'social technologies'. Genres can be, I suggest, disembedded in this sense. Secondly, Habermas's distinction (1984) between **communicative and strategic action**, is, I shall suggest, relevant to the commonly assumed relationship between genres

and social purposes or goals. Third, societal informalization (Misztal 2000) and the move away from overt hierarchies, can be textually researched in terms of the 'conversationalization' of public discourse (Fairclough 1992). The fourth theme is the question of the public sphere (Arendt 1958, Habermas 1989 and Fairclough 1999) and dialogue – approaching research questions about the state of the public sphere, the sphere in which people act as citizens, in terms of analysis of dialogical features of texts, an issue I have touched upon already in chapter 3. Fifth, is the relationship between social change and technological change – new communication technologies are associated, I shall suggest, with the emergence of new genres. Sixth, is a further discussion of ideology (see chapters 1 and 3) with respect particularly to argumentation and argument as a class of genres. And finally, the seventh theme, is a discussion of news narratives.

I shall first outline a general framework for analysis of genres, and then look specifically at three types of genre (each of which can be seen as 'families' of many different specific genres – see the discussion of levels of abstraction immediately below): dialogue, argument, and narrative. I shall discuss these with particular attention to, respectively, the social research issues of public space and citizenship, ideologies, and news.

Pre-genres, disembedded genres, and situated genres

One of the difficulties with the concept of genre is that genres can be defined on different levels of abstraction. For example, one might say that Narrative is a genre, but then so, too, is Report in the sense of a factual narrative about actual events, and so, too, is a Television News Report, i.e. the particular form of report characteristic of television news. If Narrative, Argument, Description, and Conversation are genres, they are genres on a high level of abstraction. They are categories which transcend particular networks of social practices, and there are for instance many different types of Narrative genres (e.g. conversational narratives, the endless 'stories' in the press and on television, the 'stories' that clients tell counsellors in therapy, etc.) which are more specifically situated in terms of social practices. If we say that a genre is tied to a particular social practice or network of social practices, then we should call Narrative, etc. something different. Swales (1990) suggest the term 'pre-genre', which I shall use.

However, this does not entirely resolve the problem, because there are other categories such as Interview or Report which are less abstract than Narrative or Argument, yet clearly do transcend particular networks of practices. We should note that there is a socio-historical process involved here – what Giddens (1991) has called 'disembedding'. That is, genres being, so to speak, lifted out of, 'disembedded' from, particular networks of social practices where they initially developed, and becoming available as a sort of 'social technology' which transcends both

differences between networks of practices and differences of scale. Interview, for instance, encompasses many different types which are specialized for particular social practices (job interview, celebrity interview on television, political interview etc.), and even quite specific forms such as political interview transcend differences of scale to become internationally used forms. The disembedding of genres is a part of the restructuring and rescaling of capitalism. For instance, the self-publicizing genre used by towns and cities to attract investment (see Example 2 in the Appendix, pages 231–3) involves the disembedding of the genre of corporate advertising from business practices (as local government has become more like a business); but this specialized self-publicizing genre itself transcends differences of scale (exemplified by the fact that it has only recently been adopted in ex-socialist countries such as Hungary, where the example comes from – the example also points to the significance of the 'global' spread of English in the scalar disembedding of genres).

I think it is useful to elaborate the terminology here in order to avoid confusion between different levels of abstraction. I shall use 'pre-genre' as suggested above for the most abstract categories like Narrative, 'disembedded genre' for somewhat less abstract categories like Interview, 'situated genre' for genres which are specific to particular networks of practices such as 'ethnographic interview' (see Example 1, pages 229–30).

An added complication, which I discussed in chapter 2, is that particular texts may be innovative in terms of genre – they may mix different genres in novel ways. So one cannot assume any simple correspondence between situated genres and actual texts and interactions – which like any form of social activity are open to the creativity and indeed transgression of individual agents. For this reason, I do not agree with Swales when he defines a genre as 'a class of communicative events' (Swales 1990): actual events (texts, interactions) are not 'in' a particular genre, they do not instantiate a particular genre – rather they draw upon the socially available resource of genres in potentially quite complex and creative ways. The genres associated with a particular network of social practices constitute a *potential* which is variably drawn upon in *actual* texts and interactions. It is true however that some classes of text are less generically complex than others – so Swales' view of genre may perhaps make sense, for example, in the case of journal articles in certain natural sciences, but not as a general view of the relationship between text and genre.

In addition to the sort of genre mixing discussed in chapter 2, the mixing of genres in texts takes the form of what we can call the emergence of 'formats', texts which are effectively assemblies of different texts involving different genres. Websites are a good example of formats. For example, Reclaim the Streets is anti-globalization network which specializes is forms of political action directed at 'reclaiming' the public space of the street, which global capitalism is seen as having

taken away from the people. The website offers the following menu: What's up, Archive, Propaganda, How to, Where, Images, Ideas. A variety of different things are being done in these different parts of the site, bringing together a variety of different genres. For instance, 'Propaganda' is an expository argument in favour of the political strategy of Reclaim the Streets, whereas 'How to' (e.g. 'How to sort a street party') is a 10-point 'recipe' for organizing an action. See Hawisher and Selfe (2000).

There is another way in which genres can be mixed in texts: there may be several genres which are hierarchically related. In Example 1 for instance we can say that the main genre is ethnographic interview, but other genres are drawn upon in the manager's responses. In the manager's first turn at the beginning of the extract, there is a narrative about the history of Liverpool; and the manager is developing an argument in the course of the extract. We can identify, then, a main genre and what we can call 'sub-genres'.

Analysing individual genres

The individual genres of a text or interaction (e.g. the main and sub-genres of Example 1, ethnographic interview, expository argument, conversational narrative) can be analysed in terms of: Activity, Social Relations, and Communication Technology – what are people doing, what are the social relations between them, and what communication technology (if any) does their activity depend on?

Activity

The question, 'what are people doing?', here means specifically, 'what are people doing discoursally?' When we think of social events, we are concerned with activities overall, in their non-discoursal as well as discoursal aspect. Here the focus is on the discourse. But a distinction needs to be drawn between cases where the social activity is primarily discoursal (a lecture, for example), and cases where discourse has an ancillary role (e.g. fixing the engine of a car, or playing football). In the case of a lecture, there is a specifically discoursal activity with its own organizational properties, which can be analysed separately from relatively secondary non-discoursal elements of the overall activity such as the use of an overhead projector or power-point. In the case of a game of football, it would be difficult to argue that there is a specifically discoursal activity distinct from the overall activity. Whether discourse is primary or ancillary is a matter of degree.

It is common for genre to be defined in terms of the purposes of the activity. For instance, according to Swales (1990) a genre 'comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes'. A particular genre may have a number of purposes. For instance, one might see

Example 2 as having the primary purpose of attracting investment to Békéscsaba, but it would also seem to have other purposes such as convincing people that it is a good place to live in, and that it has a dynamic and perhaps 'enterprising' local authority (and mayor in particular). And, as this indicates, purposes can be hierarchically ordered: one might see the main overall purpose as to attract investment, and the other purposes are means to doing that. Purposes may be relatively explicit or implicit.

Example 1 can be seen as having a hierarchy of purposes: a relatively explicit purpose of finding out how managers see themselves and what they do, but also 'higher' implicit purposes, one tied to academic practices ('to bring out the theoretical thinking which lies beneath the surface of the practical activity of managerial work'), another to business practices (to produce a statement of management competencies). This example shows that looking at hierarchies of purposes is one way in which to see how a text or interaction figures within networks of practices. The explicit purpose of finding out how managers see things is the purpose associated with the practice of social research and the genre of ethnographic interview, the other purposes can be seen as anticipating transformations across the network of social practices (ethnographic research, academic writing, business) and the chain of genres (interview, expository argument, checklist) which the interviewer will certainly 'have in mind' though the manager may not.

However, there are problems in privileging purpose too much in one's definition of genre. While it is true that many genres are clearly purposive, clearly tied to broadly recognized social purposes, this is not true of all genres. What are the purposes of having a chat with a friend, for example? Of course, it is perfectly possible to identify purposes even in a friendly chat, but it seems quite misleading to see it as purpose-driven in the sense that an interview is. We can see the source of the problem of over-privileging purpose in terms of Habermas's distinction between 'communicative' and 'strategic' action (1984) – interaction oriented to arriving at understanding, as opposed to interaction oriented to getting results. The modernization of social life involves the emergence of increasingly complex social systems whose rationality is 'instrumental' (rather than communicative), in which interaction is predominantly strategic – which are, in short, oriented to efficiently producing results. Purpose-driven genres characterized by determinate structure are a significant part of these instrumental social systems. But, in Habermas's terms, the 'lifeworld' (while under threat from these systems) has a predominantly communicative rationality and predominantly communicative interaction, and correspondingly genres which do not have such determinate structure. The problem is confusing the modernizing tendency towards purpose-driven genres with genre as such. We might even see this as ideological, in the sense it legitimizes what Habermas diagnoses as the 'pathological' over-extension of systems and instrumental rationality – the 'colonization' of the lifeworld by them.

The distinction between strategic and communicative is not as neat as this suggests. They sometimes occur in combination, in various ways. For example, a widespread strategy in strategic interaction is the simulation of communicative interaction – the apparent informal chattiness of much communication between employees in service industries (e.g. in hotels or shops) and customers or clients is at least in part strategically motivated by the instrumental purposes of business organizations. We can see this in terms of higher-level, implicit purposes. Conversely, even a friendly chat does not necessarily preclude purpose-driven strategies – the point is rather that it cannot be reduced to them.

The conclusion from these reservations about the over-privileging of purpose is not that we should no longer see purpose as relevant to genre, but that we should avoid centring our view of genre on purpose. Rather, we can say in less loaded terms that genres vary in terms of the nature of the activity they constitute or are a part of, and that some activities but not others are strategic and purpose-driven. Or rather, since it is a matter of degree, that some activities are more strategic (and less communicative in Habermas's sense) than others.

Generic structure

The privileging of purpose goes along with a view of genre analysis as primarily concerned with 'staging', differentiating genres in terms of their **generic structure**. Analysis of generic structure is of value for more strategic, purpose-driven genres. But it follows from what I have said above about genre mixing that it will not always be possible or indeed helpful to identify a clear staging or generic structure in an actual text or interaction. The more ritualized an activity is, the more relevant such an analysis is. For example, mundane market transactions described by Mitchell in Morocco or Hasan in Australia (Halliday and Hasan 1989, Mitchell 1957) seem to be quite highly ritualized, with predictable elements occurring in a predictable order, so analysis of their generic structure would seem to be relevant. But even in this case, there are complications – certain elements always occur (e.g. the customer asking for goods, the salesperson giving the customer the goods, the customer paying, etc.) whereas others only sometimes occur (e.g. the salesperson initiating the sale by asking for instance 'What can I get you?'); the sequence in which some elements occur is rigid, whereas for other elements it can be varied (e.g. there may be an exchange of greetings before or after the salesperson initiates the sale).

My conclusion is that we need to look for staging in analysing texts and interactions, but not expect to always find that they are organized in terms of a clear generic structure, and link analysis in these terms to the question of ritualization (Connerton 1989). A point of tension in the social transformations of new capitalism is between pressures towards instability, variability, flexibility etc., and pressure

towards social control, stabilization and ritualization. Even in a period of fast social change where 'flexibility' is one of the buzz-words, organizations have an interest is establishing and maintaining control through ritualization. This is widely effected through training. A good example in the area of market transactions is the training of workers in 'call centres' who either initiate telephone sales or deal with customer service inquiries. Cameron (2000) cites the following memorandum to staff in a financial services centre:

Standard Call Speech

You should all know by now that we intend to introduce a standard telephone speech. There are a number of reasons for standardising the speech and improving call techniques. The most important of which is Meeting and Exceeding Customer Expectations. If we don't, someone else will.
Some more reasons are:

- Creating a professional image
- Improves quality of processing
- Allows you to manage the call sequence and pace

Every operator must use the speech, no exceptions!

Cameron found call centres that 'provided employees with a script covering more or less any interactional move that could occur in the course of a transaction, imposed detailed style rules regarding how they could speak, and monitored compliance assiduously'. This implies not only a rigid staging of telephone conversations, but also control over how operators speak (answering the phone with a smile, sounding energetic, etc.). Call centres are as Cameron says 'communication factories' in which communication is commodified and industrialized. This is linked to the overwhelming focus on 'skills' in education and training, including the sort of 'communication skills' which are demanded for this sort of work.

Let us look at one or two examples of generic structure and organization. The first is an accident report from a local newspaper.

Firemen Tackle Blaze

Night shift workers on a coating line at Nairn Coated Products, St George's Quay, Lancaster had to be evacuated when fire broke out in an oven on Wednesday evening.

Four fire engines attended the incident and firemen wearing breathing apparatus tackled the flames which had started when a break off in an oven caught fire under the infra red element.

The fire caused severe damage to 20 metres of metal trunking, and to the interior of a coating machine and the coating room was smoke logged.

But the department was running again by Thursday morning.

Lancaster Guardian, 7 October 1986

Such reports have a rather predictable and well-defined generic structure which we can summarize as: headline + lead paragraph (the opening paragraph of the story) + satellites (paragraphs 2 and 3) + wrap-up (paragraph 4). The headline and lead give summaries of the story – the gist of the story. The satellites add detail typically the ordering of satellites is flexible, one can more or less freely change the ordering without affecting the story. The wrap-up gives the outcome of the events reported (the accident and the action taken in response to it), often as in this case how things came back to normal. One can relate this typical generic structure to the way in which news not only reports disturbances of normality, but also their rectification.

The next example is taken from Hasan's discussion of shopping transactions referred to above (Halliday and Hasan 1989):

C: Can I have ten oranges and a kilo of bananas please?
V: Yes, anything else?
C: No, thanks.
V: That'll be dollar forty.
C: Two dollars.
V: Sixty, eighty, two dollars. Thank you.

Here again, there is a relatively clear and predictable generic structure. The Customer begins with a Sale Request, the Vendor responds with a Sale Compliance (which will actually consist primarily of non-linguistic action, getting the goods and wrapping them up, as well as optionally a linguistic element – 'Yes' in this case) plus a Bid for a further Sale. In this case the Customer rejects the Bid, then the Vendor makes a Payment Request to which the Customer responds with a Payment Compliance (again, primarily non-linguistic, giving the Vendor some money, though accompanied with a linguistic element). The Vendor Gives Change (and verbally counts it out in this case), followed by Thanks. (I have capitalized the stages in the generic structure.)

Even where there is a relatively clear and predictable generic structure, as in these cases, we find quite a lot of variation in actual texts. There is a limit to how far we can really talk about structure in a tight sense, i.e. obligatory elements in an obligatory order. Some stages may for instance be missing (e.g. not all accident reports have wrap-ups, not all buying transactions include a vendor bidding for a further sale). But for many texts, it seems pointless to talk about an overall 'structure' at all. Consider for instance Example 2 ('Festival Town Flourishes'). We can see the text as made up of generically different parts: main 'report', 'basic facts' inset, photographs with captions, 'leader' photo + highlighted quote. The main report consists of a headline + series of factual statements (descriptions) interspersed with reported speech. The sequence of elements in the body of the text is topically controlled. The text begins with the sort of topical development one expects in tourist literature, starting from the region and working towards the town itself and its notable features. The topical choice then for most of the text would seem to be determined by a sense of what makes a town attractive to investors. There is a degree of organization here, but it's not obvious that we can call it structure.

I shall return to the question of generic structure below in discussing the analysis of dialogues, narrative, and argument.

Social relations

Genres as forms of interaction constitute particular sorts of social relations between interactants. Social relations are relations between social agents, which can be of different types: organizations (e.g. local government, a business organization), groups (e.g. a campaigning group such as Reclaim the Streets), or individuals. Communication can be between organizations or groups or individuals, or combine different types of social agents. An influential sociolinguistic study by Brown and Gilman (1960) suggests that social relations vary in two dimensions, 'power' and 'solidarity', or social hierarchy and social distance. An issue of particular contemporary interest is the relationship between what a social analysis of networks of practices, institutions etc. might suggest about social hierarchy and distance, and how social hierarchy and distance are construed in genres.

Consider for instance communication between organizations and individuals, which is pervasive in contemporary social life, in advertising, government, and so forth. We might say, sociologically speaking, that communication between organizations and individuals is high in both social hierarchy (organizations tend to exercise power over individuals) and social distance (organizations operate on national, regional or global scales whereas individuals occupy specific locales). Indeed, new capitalism is characterized by the increasing power of organizations operating at increasingly global scales over individuals. But this entails potentially

risky problems of legitimacy and alienation, as one can see from the sometimes virulent reactions of local communities to the impact upon them of policies imposed by organizations such as the International Monetary Fund. And it is noteworthy that contemporary genres for 'action at a distance', genres of governance (see chapter 2), through which organizations communicate with individuals, are pervasively characterized by simulated social relations which, we might argue, tend to mystify social hierarchy and social distance.

Example 7 (Appendix, pages 239–41) illustrates this at the level of format. The World Economic Forum, alarmed perhaps at the mounting critiques of the neo-liberal globalization it has advocated and its own influence as a non-democratic organization, set up an interactive web-site which invites individuals to contribute to its debates by sending email messages which are (selectively) published on the web-site. The web-site therefore combines the voice of the organization (the summary of the debate, in the example) with the voices of individuals from all over the world, in the form of extracts from emails they have sent (not included in the example). The key question, however, is whether this constitutes a substantive change in social relations between this powerful international organization and individuals and the local communities they belong to.

Example 5 (Appendix, pages 237–8) is an extract from a speech by the British Prime Minister Tony Blair which is immediately addressed to a Labour Party conference, but inevitably also addressed, anticipating reports in the media, to the wider public. Again, a social analysis of British politics and government would suggest that there is substantial inequality of power and social distance between the government (the organization Blair speaks for) and individuals hearing or reading reports of the speech in the media. Yet it is now a commonplace of political communication that political leaders appear to speak for themselves rather than just on behalf of governments (e.g. 'I realise why people protest against globalization'), which we might see as communication between an organization and individuals simulating person-to-person communication ('conversationalization' of public discourse as I have called it, Fairclough 1992 – see also literature on social 'informalization' and the shift away from explicit hierarchies, e.g. Misztal 2000). Example 11 (Appendix, pages 246–7), an extract from a government consultation paper, begins with an inclusive 'we' which reduces hierarchy and distance by implying that all of 'us' are in the same boat, and uses expressions ('ways of doing things', 'the types of jobs we do') which evoke everyday experience and language.

Similar points might even be made about Example 1. A positive view of ethnographic interview might see it as a worthy resource for reducing the distance between the practical lives of people being researched, and the academy. Alternatively, if we see academic research as part of the apparatus of governance as suggested in chapter 2, we might see it as mystifying social hierarchy and distance. Perhaps more reasonably, we might see a certain ambivalence.

Communication technologies

Discourse can be differentiated with respect to communication technologies in terms of two distinctions (compare Martin 1992): two-way versus one-way communication, and mediated versus non-mediated communication. This gives us, schematically, four possibilities:

Two-way non-mediated: face-to-face conversation
Two-way mediated: telephone, email, video conferencing
One-way non-mediated: lecture, etc.
One-way mediated: print, radio, television, Internet, film

The increasing complexity of the networking of social practices in contemporary societies is linked to new communication technologies – telegraph, telephone, radio, television, and more recently electronic information technology (e.g. the Internet) – which have significantly enhanced both one-way and two-way mediated communication. One way in which genres differ from one another is in the communication technologies they are specialized for, and one factor in changing genres is developments in communication technologies: the development of new communication technologies goes along with the development of new genres.

An example is the development of 'formats' on the web, which I have already referred to. Example 7 is taken from a web-site which combines different genres, including expository arguments providing summaries of the debates at the World Economic Forum annual meeting (as in the extract included in the example), email messages sent in from people around the world in response to the debates (both forms of written language), and excerpts from the debate (spoken language) – it is a 'format' in the sense I discussed above. The format brings together genres which are taken from other technologies (e.g. print in the case of the expository argument of the example) and genres which have developed as part of technological change (e.g. email). The novelty of the format is partly to do with its particular form of 'multimodality' (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001) – it combines different semiotic modalities, including photographs, visual imagery (including the logo of the World Economic Forum), video (it is possible to view extracts from the debates), as well as language. A general issue that arises in analysing genre is which semiotic modalities are drawn upon and how they are combined. The format is also non sequential:

one is offered a range of choices which allow one to take many different paths through the web-site. And it is consequently interactive, in the sense that a visitor to the web-site can decide what to look at and what not to look at, in what order; but also in the sense that the debates at Davos were 'opened' to visitors, who had the option of contributing through emails which were then selectively included in the site. However, one should not overstate 'interactive': the design of the web-site is constraining as well as enabling, i.e. it offers options, but also strongly limits them.

The transformations of new capitalism, the restructuring and re-scaling of network relations between social practices, both depend upon new technologies (see Castells 1996 for one account). Genre analysis has a significant contribution to make to research on the relationship between technological change, mediation (Silverstone 1999), economic change, and wider social change – both in terms of how the integration of new technologies into economic, political, social and cultural processes is instantiated through new genres, and in terms of how genre chains (chapter 2) are woven into the fabric of the 'information society'. Another issue is the restructuring of relations between the different forms of communication associated with different technologies. For instance, email has displaced print (memos, etc.) and probably to some extent face-to-face communication (conversation) in communication within organizations, though all three coexist in particular relations with each other. Or again, conversation in everyday life increasingly intersects with, draws upon, and is shaped by, various forms of mediated communication such as television.

Dialogue and the public sphere

Let us begin with conversation, 'chat' (on the analysis of conversational dialogue, see Cameron 2001). Informal conversation can be characterized in terms of an unconstrained alternation of speaker turns. Participants are equal in their right to take turns, in the sort of turns they can take (e.g. being able to ask questions as well as answer them), in their right to expect to be able to speak without interruption, and so forth. Much informal conversation has something approximating these features, but one must immediately add that even informal conversation shows inequalities which can be attributed to social relations between participants. For instance, research on language and gender (Talbot 1996) has suggested that there is an unequal distribution of turns in conversation between women and men in, for example, intimate relationships (that women tend to be interrupted more than men, that men give less conversational indications of active listening than women, and so forth).

One approach to analysing dialogue is to set actual dialogues against a co-operative and egalitarian template which is approximated only in some dialogues. Such a

template can be specified as participants being equal with respect to the 'right' to, for instance (Fairclough 1999):

1. take turns
2. use turns to act in various ways – asking questions, making requests, complaining, etc.
3. speak without interruption
4. select and change topics
5. offer interpretations or summaries of what has been said

Dialogue in various institutional contexts often involves unequal restrictions on such conversational 'rights'. For instance, in interviews turns are likely to be assigned to an interviewee by an interviewer rather than taken by the interviewee, only interviewers have the right to ask questions while interviewees have the obligation to answer them, interviewers are more likely to interrupt interviewees than vice-versa, interviewers have greater control over topics and are more likely to offer interpretations or summaries of what has been said, and to 'repair' what interviewees say. However, this characterizes perhaps a certain type of job interview more closely than for instance the ethnographic interview of Example 1, where although there is, for instance, this unequal distribution of questions and answers, the interviewee is able to speak at length without interruption, to select and change topics, and so forth.

Questions about dialogue are of considerable contemporary importance with respect to effects of new capitalism on democracy and the 'public sphere', which I briefly discussed in chapter 3. The worry is that the restructuring of capitalism is eroding democracy and the public sphere. This is a partly a matter of its effects upon nation-states and their political systems: given the increasing consensus within the political mainstream that neo-liberal globalization is a mere fact of life which nation-states have to compete to succeed in, the space for political debate on issues of substance becomes more limited. This is evident in the relative marginalization of national parliaments in favour of specialist committees, in the limited effect of the European Parliament on policy-formation, as well as in a perceived decline in substantive public debate in public meetings, the media, and so forth.

What does this have to do with dialogue? There is a great deal of talk about 'dialogue', 'deliberation', 'consultation' and so forth in contemporary politics, not to mention the widespread advocacy of 'partnerships' of various sorts, all of which implies a strong commitment to democracy which the considerations mentioned above make somewhat suspect (Fairclough 2000b). An effective public sphere can be defined in terms of the quality of the dialogue which takes place within it, as theorists

of the public sphere (e.g. Habermas 1989, Arendt 1958) have implied. This suggests that the quality and limits of contemporary democratic forms can be fruitfully assessed by looking at the properties and qualities of what passes as political or social 'dialogue'. For instance, there is quite a lot of experimentation in progress towards developing effective forms of public deliberation and consultation – focus groups, citizens' panels, and so forth. How might we evaluate these as public sphere dialogue?

I used the approach of setting actual dialogue against a normative template with particular reference to the public sphere in an earlier paper (Fairclough 1999), and reformulated this as a set of specifications for 'real dialogue' in Fairclough (2000b). This is a normative characterization of features which dialogue needs to have in order to be effective public sphere dialogue:

(a) People decide to enter dialogue, and can continue the dialogue on other occasions;
(b) Access is open to anyone who wants to join in, and people have equal opportunities to contribute to the dialogue;
(c) People are free to disagree, and differences between them are recognized;
(d) There is space for consensus to be reached, alliances to be formed;
(e) It is talk that makes a difference – it can lead to action (e.g. policy change).

Consider Example 8 (Appendix, pages 241–4), an extract from a British television 'debate' on the future of the monarchy, on which I commented in Chapter 3 with respect to difference. The introduction to the programme depicts it in terms of the audience casting their votes in the telephone 'referendum' after rationally weighing up the evidence and arguments provided in the programme – though this was in fact impossible, because votes had to be cast *during* the programme. There was also a highly questionable implication that the referendum may actually affect the future of the monarchy. Thus the programme seems to claim to be constituting a public sphere drawing citizens into speech and action. Yet the sort of 'dialogue' we have here is problematic as public sphere dialogue which can involve people as citizens on a number of counts. First, participation was by invitation only, whereas public sphere dialogue should be accessible to anyone with an interest. Second, this was a one-off event with tight regulation of time, so there was no room for a process of properly voicing differences and perhaps moving beyond differences to form consensus or alliances, which effective public sphere dialogue would entail. Third, this is not dialogue between equals: the 'dialogue' was regulated by the journalists in terms of who took turns in what order and at what length, selection and change of topic, etc. (In fact the panel of 'experts' in the programme did become a more open dialogue, but only because its members sometimes ignored the chairman's

attempts to regulate them.) Aspirations of television towards constituting a public sphere are always limited by commercial pressures to making what journalists perceive as 'good television' – which implies tight regulation of the conduct of dialogue. See Fairclough 1999.

Another problematic area in terms of citizenship and the public sphere is processes of 'consultation' over contentious issues such as the disposal of nuclear waste and the siting of trials of genetically-modified crops (see Example 15). While there is some official provision for 'consultation' with the public on such matters, there is little chance for the development of effective public sphere dialogue or for people to act as citizens on such issues (though they may do so in other forums organized by campaigning groups such as Friends of the Earth). Public meetings tend to be officially viewed as 'consultation' only in the highly reduced sense of officials giving information and answering questions – hardly 'consultation' in any meaningful sense. In so far as real dialogue does emerge on such occasions, it does so through members of the public stretching or by-passing or contesting the 'rules' of the genre. I shall discuss Example 15 in Chapter 10 with respect to citizenship and expertise.

Argument, assumptions and ideologies

A general view of the generic structure of an argument (based on Toulmin 1958) is that it combines three primary moves: Grounds, Warrants, Claim (Gieve 2000, Van Eemeren *et al.* 1997). The Grounds are the premises of the argument, the Warrant is what justifies the inference from the Grounds to the Claim. We can also distinguish Backing, which gives support for Warrants. Let us look at Example 7 (Appendix, pages 239–41). There seem to be two main arguments here which are somewhat confusingly intermingled. The first can be summed up as follows: globalization is often not delivering the goods in the South (Grounds); globalization will deliver the goods if changes are made in national and global governance (Warrant); globalization can deliver the goods (Backing); changes should be made in global and national governance (Claim). The second: globalization is often perceived in the South in terms of social challenges rather than economic opportunities (Grounds); perceptions can be changed through organizational change (change in governance) (Warrant); changes should be made in national and global governance (Claim). The mixture of these two arguments leads to an ambivalence: is this an argument about how to make globalization work for the South, or about how to make it seem to work ('seem more humane')?

Notice also that the Backing for the first argument is assumed rather than explicitly asserted – indeed the title presupposes that globalization can deliver the goods. A general difficulty in analysing arguments is that elements of arguments may be implicit, taken for granted, assumed (recall the discussion of assumptions

in chapter 3). But notice also that the assumption that globalization *can* deliver the goods (in 'the South') is a highly contentious assumption, and an assumption which is associated with a particular, neo-liberal, economic discourse, as are other claims and assumptions here (that growth will come if certain structural and policy changes are made, that the benefits of growth 'should' reach all, that 'transparency' reduces inequality). Warrants and Backing for arguments are often specific to particular discourses, and often assumed rather than made explicit (Gieve 2000). Where this is so, one might consider the ideological work that a text is doing, i.e. the work of making contentious, positioned and interested representations a matter of general 'common sense'. From a different point of view, one might see arguing on the basis of a contentious and questionable assumption as flawed argument.

This analysis is very abstract, however – it represents the logical structure of the main arguments but not the texturing of the arguments, not the way they are developed in the text, which also contains a number of what we might call 'sub-arguments' as well as the main arguments. So it is useful to supplement such an abstract formulation of arguments with analysis of their textual elaboration. One complication here is 'voice': is this text reporting (the arguments within) a debate (as it purports to be – that is implied in 'a view from the South' in the heading), developing an argument 'of its own', or both? I think the answer is, both, which means it is ambivalent in terms of its main genre – is it a report, or an exposition?

Let's look more closely at the second half of paragraph 4, from 'Cultural homogenization'. Two arguments are reported on the theme of cultural homogenization, one attributed to 'many', the other to 'others'. The former is identified as a 'fear'. The latter is developed over three sentences, only the first of which contains an attribution ('others disagree'). Notice in particular the third of these sentences ('In a world with close contact . . .'), which formulates the Claim ('governors must be careful not to steer diversity down the destructive paths of the past'). Whose Claim is this? There is a similar ambivalence in the following argument about rich and poor, which consists only of Claims without Grounds (or Warrants). The first of its two sentences vaguely attributes a Claim by identifying it as 'concern' (somebody is concerned – but who?), whereas the two Claims of the second sentence ('the benefits of overall growth should reach all', 'economies that are more transparent tend to have less income inequalities') are not attributed. Again, whose Claims are these?

Arguments can take a dialogical form, i.e. the form of two or more people arguing. But it is also useful to analyse 'monological' arguments such as this one in a dialogical way. Some arguments have a more or less explicit or implicit 'protagonist–antagonist' organization. This is arguably the case here, though the identity of the protagonist in particular is not that clear. The 'fear' and 'concern' of antagonists are answered by the counter-arguments of a protagonist. The title ('a view from the South') would seem to suggest that the antagonist is (someone speaking for) the South, representing the view and the arguments of the South. Yet here and elsewhere, the text seems to be organized in terms of some unidentified protagonist (someone speaking for the executive of the World Economic Forum, perhaps?) arguing against views from the South. So I am left wondering whether this is a summary of views from the South, or an argument against these views.

The argument around the case of Ghana in paragraph 5 shows a similar ambivalence. The second sentence of the paragraph (beginning 'Ghana') formulates the Grounds. The following sentences again set up an antagonist–protagonist opposition over Claims, opposing the 'common' claim that globalization is to blame with what 'some say', with an unattributed elaboration of the Claim in the final sentence ('the fundamental structures of a market economy . . . must first be in place'). The mantra of neo-liberalism is implicit in the (again unidentified) protagonist's argument: countries must compete for investment and growth, and follow the prescriptions of organizations like the IMF to succeed. In the final paragraph, the Claim 'leaders will make things easier by striving for good governance', which is also reformulated in the following sentence, seems to be addressed to 'the South', though it's not clear by whom, who the protagonist is – are we perhaps to take it as what some people from 'the South' say about others? It isn't clear. 'Leaders' are the antagonists in this case, though we are not given their arguments (maybe to the effect that there are problems in increasing 'transparency', etc.). These two final paragraphs contain the clearest formulations of the Claims of main arguments 1 and 2 respectively, so we can see the text as a whole as building up to these key Claims.

The points can be related to the discussion of difference in chapter 3: there is an obfuscation of difference here, perhaps a covert polemic in which the identities of the two 'sides' are left unclear.

Narrative

Bal (1997) approaches the analysis of narratives in terms of an analytical distinction between: fabula, story (this distinction originates in Russian formalism), and narrative text (see also Ochs 1997, Toolan 1998). The fabula is the 'material or content that is worked into a story', a 'series of logically and chronologically related events'. The story is a fabula that is 'presented in a certain manner' – this involves for instance the arrangement of events in a sequence which can be different from their actual chronological order, providing the social agents of actual events with 'distinct traits' which transform them into 'characters', and 'focalizing' the story in terms of a particular 'point of view'. The same story can appear in a range of narrative texts, texts in which a narrator relates the story in a particular medium – for instance a story in conversation, a radio news story, a television news story, a documentary, or a film.

I shall use this general framework to discuss specifically the stories one finds in news. Let us go back first to the short newspaper story I discussed above:

Firemen Tackle Blaze

Night shift workers on a coating line at Nairn Coated Products, St George's Quay, Lancaster had to be evacuated when fire broke out in an oven on Wednesday evening.

Four fire engines attended the incident and firemen wearing breathing apparatus tackled the flames which had started when a break off in an oven caught fire under the infra red element.

The fire caused severe damage to 20 metres of metal trunking, and to the interior of a coating machine and the coating room was smoke logged.

But the department was running again by Thursday morning.

Lancaster Guardian, 7 October 1986

The fabula can be summed up in terms of the events in their actual chronological order (which can be more or less deduced from the story): a fire broke out (a break off in an oven caught fire; the coating room was smoke logged; metal trunking and a coating machine were damaged), workers were evacuated, firefighters tackled the flames, the department was running again the next morning. The story places events in a sequence which differs from their chronological order. In the headline, the action by the firefighters is in focus (the fire is represented in a nominalization ('blaze') which is grammatically the object of 'tackle'). The lead paragraph, the representation of the evacuation of workers precedes the representation of the fire (the latter is in a subordinate clause). In the following paragraph, representation of the action of the firefighters precedes representation of the fire (again the latter is in a subordinate clause). The sequence is then: the damage caused by the fire, the department getting back to normal. These sequential features focalize the story in terms of the response to the fire (evacuation, firefighters tackling the fire) rather than the fire itself. This is not just a matter of sequence: the genre of news (accident) report provides positions of salience which are germane to this focalization. It is there in the headline and the lead-paragraph, and one might see the positioning of 'resumption of work as normal' in the wrap-up as giving it a salience which is also part of the focalization: the journalistic point of focalizes reponses to the accident and the restoration of normality. The narrative text is a written report, and the narrator is of course a journalist.

News is making stories out of series of logically and chronologically related events. One way of seeing news is as a form of social regulation, even a form of violence: news reduces complex series of events whose relationship may not be terribly clear to stories, imposing narrative order upon them. And it is not simply the relationship between an actual series of events in a particular order, and the story

about them. Producing news stories is more fundamentally a matter of construing what may be fragmentary and ill-defined happenings as distinct and separate events, including certain happenings and excluding others, as well setting these constructed events into particular relations with each other. Making news is a heavily interpretative and constructive process, not simply a report of 'the facts'. This does not mean that news narratives are just the same as fictional narratives: news narratives, like historical narratives (Callinicos 1995), have a 'referential intention' which makes them open to questions about the relationship between story and actual events, questions of truth. They also have, one might say, an 'explanatory intention' which we can liken to 'focalization': to make sense of events by drawing them into a relation which incorporates a particular point of view. If we see news as part of the apparatus of governance (see chapter 2), this highlights the sense in which news stories are oriented to regulating and controlling events, and the ways in which people respond to events (Allan 1999).

I discussed Example 6 in chapter 3 from the perspective of intertextuality, the representation of voices and of speech. This is a story whose fabula is made up of events which are primarily speech events, as is often the case in news stories. The issue of selectivity necessarily arises: journalists are in the business of including some things which were said and excluding others (which often means excluding certain voices), selecting particular parts of what was said, and generally ordering what is often a cacophony of speech and writing into separate speech events. My comments on the example in chapter 3 point to the way in which the sequencing of events in the story, as well as the framing of events, contribute to a particular focalization which sets up a covert protagonist–antagonist relation between the West and Libya.

Let me briefly comment on this example in terms of Activity, Social Relations, and Communication Technologies. Radio news stories have a relatively well-defined generic structure which is similar to the generic structure of stories in newspapers (in having a headline and a lead, for example) but differs in ways which are linked to medium and communication technology such as the movement between a main narrator (the newsreader) and a subsidiary narrator (the correspondent) and the inclusion of recorded extracts (in this case, from a statement by the Libyan Foreign Minister). The question of purpose is a complex and controversial one. On the most obvious level, news stories have the purpose of telling people what of significance has happened in the world, but if we think in terms of hierarchies of purpose, and of the relationship between the fields of news media, politics, business and so forth, we are faced with questions about news media as part of an apparatus of governance in this case, for instance, can we reasonably attribute to such stories higher-level purposes which connect them to international politics? The same issues arise with respect to social relations: are the social relations of news simply the social relations between journalists and audiences (relations of information giving, which give rise to questions about the authoritativeness of journalists, and so forth)? Or are

the social relations of news stories covertly social relations between rulers and ruled - between government, business and so forth and the people? We might ask: whose focalization, whose point of view, is this? Finally, shifts in communication technologies have had a significant effect on news. This is clearer if we think of television news, where the whole balance between verbal story and visual and filmic image has shifted, to the point where it seems that the availability or unavailability of good film footage can be decisive in determining whether there is a story or not. At this point, we perhaps need to wonder whether the distinction between news narratives and fictional narratives is really clearcut: the aesthetics of news stories seems to become an increasingly salient issue, sometimes at the expense of their answerability to real events and questions of truth, at the same time as 'wall-to-wall news' assumes the social psychological role (once held by religion) of 'inoculating us from dread, from the numbing anxieties of a high-risk world' (Silverstone 1999).

Summary

We have seen that genre analysis proceeds from genre chains, to genre mixture, to properties of individual genres. Genres can be identified at different levels of abstraction: pre-genres, disembedded genres (which are significant within the 'disembedding' which is a feature of 'globalization'), and situated genres. Texts can combine different genres in various ways – mixing or hybridizing them, combining them in 'formats', or hierarchizing them into main genres and sub-genres. Individual genres can be differentiated in terms of Activity, Social Relations, and Communication Technology (what are people doing, what are the social relations between them, and what communication technology (if any) does their activity depend on?). With respect to Activity, only certain genres are well-defined in terms of purpose and generic structure (organization into well-defined stages), and these tend to be specialized within social systems for 'strategic' (rather than 'communicative') action. Some genres can be seen as mystifying Social Relations through 'conversationalization', simulation of conversational exchange in public contexts, which is an aspect of societal 'informalization'. Change in genres (including genre chains) is a significant aspect of technological change and the new information technologies. We discussed three specific (pre-)genres: dialogue, specifically in relation to the question of what constitutes adequate or effective public sphere dialogue, argument, in terms of the ideological significance of implicit assumptions in argument, and narrative, especially in relation to news.

5 Meaning relations between sentences and clauses

Text analysis issues

Semantic relations between sentences and clauses: causal, conditional, temporal, additive, elaborative, contrastive

Grammatical relations between clauses: paratactic and hypotactic relations

Social research issues

Legitimation

Hegemony, equivalence and difference

Appearance and reality

The focus in this chapter is on meaning relations, semantic relations, between sentences, and between clauses (or 'simple sentences') within sentences. We shall be looking for instance at causal or logical relations between sentences and clauses (for instance relations of purpose, e.g. 'You will be weighed *so that* your subsequent weight gain can be assessed', from an ante-natal text which I discuss below), or contrastive relations (e.g. 'You look at a set of elements, the same ones that everyone else sees, *but* then reassemble those floating bits and pieces into an enticing new possibility', from Example 9, a management 'guru' text also discussed later). We shall also look at how these semantic relations are 'realized' in various grammatical structures. The connection between this chapter and chapter 4 is that the type of semantic relations between sentences and clauses that one finds in a text depends on genre.

A number of social research issues can be elucidated by focusing on these semantic relations. One of these is the issue of legitimation (Habermas 1976, Van Leeuwen (undated), Van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999). According to Weber (1964), 'every