

Texts and Practices

Readings in Critical Discourse
Analysis

Edited by

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Contents

Notes on contributors	vii
Preface	xi
 Part I Critical discourse theory	
1 On critical linguistics	3
<i>Roger Fowler</i>	
2 Representational resources and the production of subjectivity: Questions for the theoretical development of Critical Discourse Analysis in a multicultural society	15
<i>Gunther Kress</i>	
3 The representation of social actors	32
<i>Theo van Leeuwen</i>	
4 Technologisation of discourse	71
<i>Norman Fairclough</i>	
5 Discourse, power and access	84
<i>Teun A. van Dijk</i>	
 Part II Texts and practices: Critical approaches	
6 The genesis of racist discourse in Austria since 1989	107
<i>Ruth Wodak</i>	
7 Ethnic, racial and tribal: The language of racism?	129
<i>Ramesh Krishnamurthy</i>	
8 A clause-relational analysis of selected dictionary entries: Contrast and compatibility in the definitions of 'man' and 'woman'	150
<i>Michael Hoey</i>	

9	The official version: Audience manipulation in police records of interviews with suspects <i>Malcolm Coulthard</i>	166
10	Conflict talk in a psychiatric discharge interview: Struggling between personal and official footings <i>Branca Telles Ribeiro</i>	179
11	Problems with the representation of face and its manifestations in the discourse of the ‘old-old’ <i>Dino Preti</i>	194
12	‘Guilt over games boys play’: Coherence as a focus for examining the constitution of heterosexual subjectivity on a problem page <i>Val Gough and Mary Talbot</i>	214
13	Barking up the wrong tree? Male hegemony, discrimination against women and the reporting of bestiality in the Zimbabwean press <i>Andrew Morrison</i>	231
14	‘Women who pay for sex. And enjoy it’: Transgression versus morality in women’s magazines <i>Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard</i>	250
	Bibliography	271
	Index	285

The representation of social actors

Theo van Leeuwen

1 INTRODUCTION

The question I shall attempt to answer in this chapter can be formulated simply: what are the ways in which social actors can be represented in English discourse? Which choices does the English language give us for referring to people? In addition I shall address another, more specific question: how are the relevant social actors represented in an instance of a particular kind of racist discourse—a discourse which represents immigration in a way that is founded on fear—the fear of loss of livelihood and the fear of loss of cultural identity as a result of the ‘influx’ of immigrants who are perceived as ‘other’, ‘different’ and ‘threatening’.

The first of these two questions is a grammatical one, if, with Halliday, we take a grammar to be a ‘meaning potential’ (‘what *can* be said’) rather than a set of rules (‘what *must* be said’). Yet, unlike many other linguistically oriented forms of Critical Discourse Analysis, I shall not start out from linguistic operations such as nominalisation and passive agent deletion, or from linguistic categories such as the categories of transitivity, but instead seek to draw up a *sociosemantic* inventory of the ways in which social actors can be represented, and to establish the sociological and critical relevance of my categories before I turn to the question of how they are realised linguistically.

There are two reasons for doing so. The first stems from the lack of bi-uniqueness of language. Agency, for instance, as a *sociological* concept, is of major and classic importance in Critical Discourse Analysis: in which contexts are which social actors represented as ‘agents’ and which as ‘patients’? But sociological agency is not always realised by linguistic agency, by the grammatical role of ‘Agent’; it can also be realised in many other ways, for instance by possessive pronouns (as in ‘our intake of migrants’) or by a prepositional phrase with ‘from’, as in example 1.1, in which the grammatical Agent is sociologically ‘patient’:

1.1 People of Asian descent say they received a sudden cold-shoulder from neighbours and co-workers.

There is no neat fit between sociological and linguistic categories, and if Critical Discourse Analysis, in investigating for instance the representation of agency, ties itself in too closely to specific linguistic operations or categories, many relevant instances of agency might be overlooked. One cannot, it seems, have it both ways with language. Either theory and method are formally neat but semantically messy (as in the dictionary: one form, many meanings), or they are semantically neat but formally messy (as in the thesaurus: one concept, many possible realisations). Linguists tend towards preserving the unity of formal categories. I shall here attempt the opposite approach, hoping to provide a set of relevant categories for investigating the representation of social actors in discourse.

Halliday (1985: ch. 10) has approached the problem of the lack of biuniqueness in another way, through his theory of grammatical metaphor: certain linguistic realisations are ‘literal’ or ‘congruent’, others ‘metaphorical’ or ‘incongruent’. But in Halliday’s account ‘congruent’ would seem to mean ‘congruent with the grammatical system’, rather than ‘congruent with reality’, the kind of congruence which, in the end, underlies most definitions of metaphor. For Halliday a clause like ‘The report confirms ...’ would not be a metaphor, because it does not violate the criterion that verbal processes do not require a human ‘Sayer’ as their subject (cf. Halliday, 1985:129). I would prefer to see ‘the report confirms...’ as just one of the ways in which we can refer to social actors in their role as ‘Sayers’, as metaphorical or unmetaphorical as any other way, but endowed with its own specific sociosemantic import and hence social distribution: it is likely to be found in contexts where the authority of utterances is bound up with the official status or role of ‘Sayers’ and/or the official status of genres. In the context of literature, on the other hand, it would be less likely to occur, because there the authority of utterances is bound up with the charismatic personality of the writer, so that we would expect ‘Shakespeare says...’ rather than ‘the play says...’, for instance. I would therefore prefer to ask: how can ‘Sayers’ be represented—impersonally or personally, individually or collectively, by reference to their person or their utterance, etc.—without privileging any of these choices as more ‘literal’ than others, and without thereby also privileging the context or contexts in which one or the other tends to occur as more normative than others.

The second reason is somewhat different, and follows from the assumption that meaning belongs to culture rather than to language and cannot be tied to any specific semiotic. Language can represent social actions impersonally, as in this headline:

1.2 Allied air activity over battlefield intensifies

but so can pictures—think of the difference between, on the one hand, ‘personalised’ pictures of bombardments, say in feature film sequences showing, in close up, the faces of the crew as they drop the bombs, as well as the faces of the villagers down below as they are about to be bombed, and, on the other hand, diagrams of the same event, for instance maps with large arrows pointing at the targets and schematic drawings representing the explosions.

There is no space here to explore this point in detail (cf. van Leeuwen, 1987, for the representation of social actors in music; Kress and van Leeuwen, 1990, and van Leeuwen, 1993a, for parallels between language and images). Nevertheless, the categories I shall propose in this chapter should, in principle, be seen as pan-semiotic: a given culture (or a given context within a culture) has not only its own, specific array of ways of representing the social world, but also its own specific ways of mapping the different semiotics on to this array, of prescribing, with greater or lesser strictness, what can be realised verbally as well as visually, what only verbally, what only visually, and so on. And these arrangements will also be subject to historical change, sometimes even violent change, as in iconoclasms. The point is important for Critical Discourse Analysis, for, with the increasing use of visual representation in a wide range of contexts, it becomes more and more pressing to be able to ask the same critical questions with regard to both verbal and visual representations, indeed, with regard to representations in all the ‘media’ that form part of contemporary ‘multimedia’ texts.

Despite all this, this chapter still attempts to be grounded in linguistics. Each of the representational choices I shall propose will be tied to specific linguistic or rhetorical realisations. To return to my earlier examples, in the case of ‘Shakespeare’ the representational choice is that of ‘nomination’ and the realisation the use of a proper name, while in the case of ‘the report confirms...’ the representational choice is that of ‘utterance autonomisation’ (see section 11 below) and the realisation the substitution of the utterance for its Sayer, hence a form of metonymical reference. The difference is that my primary focus is on sociological categories (‘nomination’, ‘agency’, etc.) rather than on linguistic categories (‘nominalisation’, ‘passive agent deletion’, etc.) and that the system network, the ‘array of choices’, I shall present in section 13 will range over a variety of linguistic and rhetorical phenomena, and find its unity in the concept of ‘social actor’, rather than in a linguistic concept such as, for instance, ‘the nominal group’.

Finally, the chapter is part of a larger project (see van Leeuwen, 1993a; 1993b) in which I am attempting in addition to map how other elements of social practices (the social activities that constitute them, the

times when and the locations where they occur, the dress and body grooming that go with them, etc.) are represented, and how representations add further elements to this, for instance the purposes and legitimations of the social practices, and the sentiments that accompany them. In short, the question addressed in this chapter is part of a larger question: how are social practices transformed into discourses about social practices—and this both in the sense of what means we have for doing so, and in the sense of how we actually do it in specific institutional contexts which have specific relations with the social practices of which they produce representations.

2 'OUR RACE ODYSSEY'

Below I reproduce the first three sections of 'Our Race Odyssey', the text from which I shall draw most of my examples, and which I use to demonstrate how the categories I propose may be used in text analysis. It was published as the leading feature article in 'Spectrum', the Saturday supplement of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, a conservative broadsheet newspaper, on 12 May 1990.

The descriptive framework I shall present in the following sections was worked out with the aid of a much larger and generically diverse corpus of texts which included fictional narratives, comic strips, news stories, newspaper editorials, advertisements, textbooks and scholarly essays, all dealing, in some form or other, with the subject of schooling, and more specifically with the transition from home to school (van Leeuwen, 1993b). As one text can never provide instances of all the categories and modes of representation, I shall, throughout the chapter, also use examples from this corpus.

- 1 2001: Our Race Odyssey.
- 2 This country will be vastly different next century if Australians feel they cannot voice legitimate fears about immigration without being branded racists, argues David Jenkins.
- 3 In Florence last month 80 young white thugs, many wearing costume masks and armed with iron bars, roamed the narrow cobbled streets attacking African street vendors.
- 4 In France, where non-European immigrants make up 6.5 per cent of the population, former president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing proposed a total halt to immigration.
- 5 In Japan, a nation with a strong tradition of keeping foreigners at arm's length, similar concerns are being expressed about a mere trickle of Third World immigrants.
- 6 Japan's National Police Agency had to apologise recently for circulating an internal memo to police stations claiming that Pakistanis

- working in Japan 'have a unique body odour', carry infectious skin diseases and tell lies 'under the name of Allah'.
- 7 The mayor of Kawaguchi has 'joked' that with so many dark-skinned foreigners in town, Japanese are having trouble seeing them at night.
 - 8 In Peru, where the son of Japanese immigrants is a presidential front-runner, the situation is reversed.
 - 9 A racist backlash against ethnic Asians has been unleashed by those who resent the prominence of centrist candidate Alberto Fujimori.
 - 10 People of Asian descent say they have been insulted in the street, denied entry to elegant restaurants and received a sudden cold-shoulder from neighbours and co-workers.
 - 11 In Canada, where the 250,000-strong Sikh community has pressed for the right to have Mounties in turbans and where 22,000 Hong Kong Chinese arrived last year, bringing bulging wallets to cities like Vancouver, racial tolerance is wearing thin.
 - 12 'Native Vancouverites will be made to feel like strangers in their own city as the influx of Asians and their capital freezes them out', wrote one reader of *The Province* newspaper in Vancouver.
 - 13 If you were sitting in Canberra and doing no more than reading the daily newspapers you would be entitled to be a bit concerned by these developments.
 - 14 They italicise the lesson that people, whatever their race, display their less attractive characteristics when they feel threatened and unable to cope with rapid change in the society around them.
 - 15 They highlight the fact that racism is seldom far below the surface—whether it is in Western Europe, in Asia, in North or South America.
 - 16 They may even call into question some aspects of Australia's immigration programme, which is now running at close to record levels, with annual net migration of about 150,000, including 60,000 migrants from Asia.
 - 17 Is the Australian Government concerned?
 - 18 Not a bit.
 - 19 Prime Minister Bob Hawke says he is 'philosophically' a high-migration man.
 - 20 He thinks our current intake is about right.
 - 21 'I hope that as we go on,' he said recently, 'that we may be able to look at higher levels of immigration.'
 - 22 Is the Prime Minister entitled to be quite so confident that we have got our immigration policy settings right?
 - 23 Is he entitled to believe that this nation, which only recently shed the White Australia Policy, is somehow impervious to racist sentiment?
 - 24 On the evidence to date there is some reason to suppose that he is.
 - 25 We have had one of the most successful immigration programmes in the world.

- 26 Forty per cent of Australians were born overseas or have at least one parent who was born overseas; in Sydney, the figure is 49 per cent.
- 27 We have become one of the most diverse groups of people in the world.
- 28 We have achieved all this with remarkably little disharmony or dislocation.
- 29 We are entitled to be proud—not apologetic—about our immigration programme.
- 30 We are entitled to be resentful about the damaging distortions that are presented as fact by Bruce Ruxton, who spent the major part of his three-year military career as an army cook, when he marches into TV studios in Singapore and Hong Kong.
- 31 We have avoided most of the problems that bedevil Western Europe because few of our non-European migrants have been poor, black, unskilled, Muslim or illegal.
- 32 They have tended to be Asian and they tended to come, at least until recently, from an educated elite that was English-speaking and middle-class.
- 33 However, all that is changing.
- 34 Migration from traditional source countries like Italy and Greece has dried up.
- 35 Migration from the Third World, especially Asia and the Middle East, is becoming increasingly important.
- 36 And though many of the new migrants are educated high-achievers from places like Singapore and Hong Kong—‘uptown’ people in American terminology—others are ‘downtown’ people from places like Vietnam, the Philippines and Lebanon.
- 37 The ‘downtown’ migrants tend to be unskilled or low-skilled, tend to have high unemployment rates—Lebanese, Turks and Vietnamese have unemployment rates three to four times the national average—and tend to be significant users of social welfare.
- 38 With these changes is coming a change in community attitudes.
- 39 Many Australians, the 1988 Fitzgerald Committee reported, were ‘bewildered’ by the changing face of Australia.
- 40 They did not feel they understood or could influence this change.
- 41 They felt ‘besieged’ by immigration.
- 42 They believed that the immigration program existed for the benefit of politicians, bureaucrats and the ethnic minorities, not for Australians as a whole.
- 43 This concern, the report noted, was reflected in surveys which showed that the level of support for stopping immigration altogether was at a postwar high.
- 44 If you stop for a moment and consider all this you will see that there is something very odd going on.

- 45 On the one hand we have a Prime Minister who says he is philosophically disposed to high migration, a Prime Minister who has been presiding over a near record intake of migrants.
- 46 On the other we have public support for immigration at an all-time low.
- 47 This suggests a yawning gap between what people think about immigration and what politicians and other community leaders feel they can or should say about immigration.
- 48 It is hardly surprising therefore that the immigration debate is building again.
- 49 Hardly surprising that there are calls for major cuts in the program.
- 50 Hardly surprising that a number of critics want to see our intake halved to 70,000 to 80,000, which would bring it into line with our postwar average.
- 51 Australia, these critics suggest, is being generous to a fault—and in danger of saddling itself with a lot of unwanted problems as a result.

3 EXCLUSION

The ‘Race Odyssey’ text draws on a representation of the social practice of immigration itself, as institutionalised in Australia, as well as on the representation of other social practices, which serve to legitimise (or delegitimise) it: the practices of writing government-commissioned reports on immigration, or of conducting public opinion surveys about it, for instance. All these practices involve specific sets of social actors, but in a given representation, for instance that of the ‘Race Odyssey’ text, a feature article in a conservative middle-class newspaper, not all the social actors are included. Some are represented, for instance Prime Minister Bob Hawke, who ‘presides over a near record intake of migrants’, others excluded, for instance the people who ‘brand as racist’ those who ‘voice legitimate fears about immigration’. Representations include or exclude social actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom they are intended. Some of the exclusions may be ‘innocent’, details which readers are assumed to know already, or which are deemed irrelevant to them, others tie in close to the propaganda strategy of creating fear, and of setting up immigrants as enemies of ‘our’ interests.

Exclusion has rightly been an important aspect of Critical Discourse Analysis. To mention just one classic example, Tony Trew (1979:97ff) showed how, in *The Times* and the *Rhodesian Herald* (anno 1975), the police were excluded in accounts of the ‘riots’ during which they had opened fire and killed demonstrators, because it was in the interest of these papers and their readers to attempt to ‘justify white rule in Africa’, and this required

a suppression of the fact that the white regimes apply violence and intimidation, and suppression of the nature of the exploitation this makes

possible. It requires that the regimes and their agents be put constantly in the role of promoters of progress, law and order, concerned to eliminate social evil and conflict, but never responsible for it.

(Trew, 1979:106)

Some exclusions leave no traces in the representation, excluding both the social actors and their activities. Such radical exclusion can play a role in a critical comparison of different representations of the same social practice, but not in an analysis of a single text, for the simple reason that it leaves no traces behind. In my study of the representation of schooling (van Leeuwen, 1993b), for instance, I found that fathers were radically excluded in texts addressing teachers, but included in many children's stories, even if often only briefly, during the breakfast preceding the first school day, or as givers of satchels, pencil cases and other school necessities. Children's stories aimed at a mass market sometimes included school support staff, but excluded the headmistress, while more 'upmarket' children's stories included the headmistress but excluded people lower than teachers in the school hierarchy, in what is clearly a class-related pattern of inclusion and exclusion.

When the activities (e.g. the killing of demonstrators) are included, but some or all of the social actors involved in it (e.g. the police) are excluded, the exclusion does leave a trace. We can ask 'but who did the killing?' or 'but who was killed?', even though the text does not provide the answers. In this case a further distinction should perhaps be made, the distinction between *suppression* and *backgrounding*. In the case of suppression, there is no reference to the social actor(s) in question anywhere in the text. Thus we learn, in the 'Race Odyssey' text, that someone or some institution surveyed the opinions of the public, but we do not find out which individual or company or other institution did it, which takes away at least one possible avenue of contesting the results of the 'surveys'. In the case of backgrounding, the exclusion is less radical: the excluded social actors may not be mentioned in relation to a given activity, but they are mentioned elsewhere in the text, and we can infer with reasonable (though never total) certainty who they are. They are not so much excluded as de-emphasised, pushed into the background.

How is suppression realised? First there is, of course, the classic realisation through passive agent deletion. Example 3.1 tells us that 'concerns are being expressed', but not who expresses them:

3.1 In Japan similar concerns are being expressed about a mere trickle of Third World immigrants.

Suppression can also be realised through non-finite clauses which function as a grammatical participant. In example 3.2 the infinitival clause 'to

maintain this policy' is embedded to function as the Carrier of an attributive clause, and this allows the social actor(s) responsible for the 'maintenance' of the policy to be excluded—and they *could* have been included, for instance, as 'for local education authorities'. The downranking of the process ('maintain') makes the fact that exclusion has taken place a little less accessible, the trace a little less clear:

3.2 To maintain this policy is hard.

It is almost always possible to delete 'Beneficiaries', social actors who benefit from an activity. Example 3.3, for instance, does not include those to whom the 'National Police Agency' apologised (the Pakistanis who had been offended?):

3.3 Japan's National Police Agency had to apologise recently for circulating an internal memo to police stations claiming that Pakistanis working in Japan 'have a unique body odour', carry infectious skin diseases and tell lies 'under the name of Allah'.

Nominalisations and process nouns similarly allow the exclusion of social actors. 'Support' and 'stopping', in example 3.4, function as nominals, although they refer to activities. The same applies to 'immigration'. Again the excluded social actors *could* have been included, for instance through postmodifying phrases with *by, of, from,* etc., but they haven't been:

3.4 The level of support for stopping immigration altogether was at a postwar high.

Processes may also be realised as adjectives, as is the case with 'legitimate' in example 3.5. Who 'legitimises' the 'fear'? The writer? We cannot be sure. The fears simply *are* legitimate, according to this representation:

3.5 Australians feel they cannot voice legitimate fears about immigration.

The activity in example 3.6 involves a human actor, the teacher who opens the door. But coding the activity in middle voice (Halliday, 1985:150–1) necessitates the exclusion of the agentive participant. The context may lead us to infer that the teacher was involved, but there can be no certainty—it might, for instance, have been the wind. The clause invites a reading in which the opening of the door, the intrusion of the teacher in the child's world of play, is given the force of a natural event.

3.6 *The door of the playhouse opened and the teacher looked in.*

It is often difficult to know whether suppressed social actors are or are not supposed to be retrievable by the reader, or, indeed, the writer. Example 3.4, for instance, does not tell us who is involved in the act of ‘stopping immigration’. Is this because readers are assumed to know already, so that more detailed reference would be overcommunicative, or is it to block access to detailed knowledge of a practice which, if represented in detail, might arouse compassion for those who are ‘stopped’? The point is that the practice is here represented as something not to be further examined or contested.

Backgrounding can result from simple ellipses in non-finite clauses with *-ing* and *-ed* participles, in infinitival clauses with *to*, and in paratactic clauses. In all these cases the excluded social actor is *included* elsewhere in the same clause or clause complex. It can also be realised in the same way as suppression, but with respect to social actors who *are* included elsewhere in the text. The two realisations background social actors to different degrees, but both play a part in reducing the number of times specific social actors are explicitly referred to.

To discuss the pattern of inclusion and exclusion in the ‘Race Odyssey’ text, it is necessary to bring the various ways in which each category of social actor is represented under a common denominator. These common denominators do not, of course, form a more transparent or congruent way of referring to them. They merely serve as an anchor for the analysis, a kind of calibration. For the purposes of analysis, then, I shall call ‘racists’ those social actors who, actively or otherwise, oppose immigration and immigrants in countries other than Australia, and I shall refer to those who do the same in Australia as ‘us’. Again, this is not to say that the latter are *not* racist, but merely to follow the distinction that underlies the way the author argues his case. I shall refer to the immigrants themselves as ‘them’, to the (Australian) Government as ‘government’, to the various experts invoked by the writer as ‘experts’, to the writer himself as ‘writer’, and to his readers, who are sometimes addressed directly, as ‘addressees’. Bruce Ruxton, the ‘racist’ Australians love to hate, is a category on his own (‘our racist’), and finally there are a few minor characters who appear only once, the ‘anti-racists’ who ‘brand as racist’ the ‘legitimate fears of Australians’, ‘Allah’, ‘European Governments’ and (Japanese) ‘police stations’. Table 3.1 displays the patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

Although the differences are not dramatic, it is clear that the most frequently included social actors are the Australian Government and ‘us’, Australians, who voice ‘legitimate fears’, while the most frequently backgrounded or suppressed social actors are, on the one hand, the immigrants, and on the other hand those in other countries who commit such

Table 3.1 Inclusion and exclusion in the 'Race Odyssey' text

	<i>Included</i> %	<i>Backgrounded</i> %	<i>Suppressed</i> %
'racists' (N=24)	67.25	20.25	12.5
'us' (N=46)	72	24	4
'them' (N=98)	61	38	1
'government' (N=32)	73	18	9

racist acts as 'insulting' and 'denying entry to elegant restaurants', and, indeed, people in general, as they are 'naturally inclined to racism' and will 'display unpleasant characteristics when they feel threatened'. In short, those who do not take part in the 'debate' between the Australian people and its government which the writer stages for us in his argument form to some extent a backdrop to this debate.

I do not want to make great claims for treating texts statistically. On the contrary, it is important to realise that the frequencies may shift with the stages in the writer's argument. In the first section of the text, where the writer discusses racism in other countries, migrants are backgrounded in 17 per cent of cases. As soon as the writer moves to his discussion of Australian immigration policy, this increases to 36 per cent. In other words, the migrants close to home are backgrounded more often. In any case, the pattern of inclusion and exclusion must be integrated with the *way in which* they are represented, which I shall discuss in the remainder of this chapter.

What, finally, remains most opaque in this text? First, the voice of the opposition—those who 'brand as racist' Australians 'who voice legitimate fears' are fully suppressed. Second, many of the 'racists' in other countries: we are not told who exactly is responsible for 'insulting people of Asian descent' or 'denying them entry to elegant restaurants', for example. Third, the voice of legitimation, which 'legitimises fears', and which 'entitles' Hawke and 'us' to the view which, by virtue of their sheer prominence in the text, the writer obliquely favours. And finally, those who have to do the dirty work of actually 'stopping' ('halting', 'cutting', etc.) the immigrants.

4 ROLE ALLOCATION

I shall now consider the roles that social actors are given to play in representations, an aspect of representation which also plays a significant

part in the work of many critical linguists (e.g. Fairclough, 1989; Fowler, 1991; Fowler *et al.*, 1979; Kress and Hodge, 1979; van Dijk, 1991): who is represented as ‘agent’ (‘Actor’), who as ‘patient’ (‘Goal’) with respect to a given action? This question remains important, for there need not be congruence between the roles that social actors actually play in social practices and the grammatical roles they are given in texts. Representations can reallocate roles, rearrange the social relations between the participants. Here is an example, from the field of television studies:

4.1 Children seek out aspects of commercial television as a consolidation and confirmation of their everyday lives.... The kids use it [television] subversively against the rule-bound culture and institution of the school
(Curthoys and Docker, 1989:68)

4.2 Television affects children’s sex-role attitudes.... Furthermore, television has been shown to influence more subtle areas such as racial attitudes and cultural views.

(Tuchman *et al.*, 1978:232)

Leaving aside aspects of the representation of social actors we have not yet discussed (objectivations such as ‘television’ and ‘subtle areas’; abstractions such as ‘aspects of commercial television’) and the exclusions (e.g. in ‘racial attitudes and cultural views’), the two major categories of social actor represented are ‘children’ and ‘television’. In Example 4.1, ‘children’ and ‘the kids’ are, grammatically, Actor in relation to activities such as ‘seeking out’ and ‘using’ (and also, if one ignores the backgrounding, of ‘consolidating’ and ‘confirming’), while ‘television’ (‘aspects of commercial television’ and ‘it’) is the Goal of both these processes. In 4.2, ‘television’ is Actor of ‘affect’ and ‘influence’, while ‘children’ (‘children’s sex-role attitudes’; ‘subtle areas such as racial attitudes and cultural views’) are Goal. In other words, in one of the representations (that of a populist, ‘active audience’ theory) the active role is given to children, the passive role to television, while in the other (that of the ‘effects’ or ‘hypodermic needle’ theory of mass communication) the active role is given to television and the passive role to children. The two examples deal, in the end, with the same reality, but which of them corresponds best to that reality is of course a problem text analysis cannot solve. What we *can* do, however, is investigate which options are chosen in which institutional and social contexts, and why these choices should have been taken up, what interests are served by them, and what purposes achieved.

I shall say, then, that representations can endow social actors with either active or passive roles. *Activation* occurs when social actors are represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity, *passivation* when they are

represented as ‘undergoing’ the activity, or as being ‘at the receiving end of it’. This may be realised by grammatical participant roles, by transitivity structures in which activated social actors are coded as Actor in material processes, Behavior in behavioural processes, Senser in mental processes, Sayer in verbal processes or Assigner in relational processes (Halliday, 1985: ch. 5). In 4.3, for example, ‘they’ (i.e. ‘us’, Australians) are Actor in relation to the process of ‘feeling’, but ‘immigration’ (i.e. ‘immigrants’; ‘them’) is activated in relation to ‘besieging’. In 4.4, on the other hand, ‘young white thugs’ are activated and ‘African street vendors’ passivated. In other words, while in other countries there may be active racists, in Australia the migrants play the active (and ‘threatening’) role, and ‘we’ are at best activated as ‘Sensers’ in relation to mental processes such as ‘feeling’.

4.3 They felt ‘besieged’ by immigration.

4.4 80 young white thugs attacked African street vendors.

When, as in these cases, activation is realised by ‘participation’ (grammatical participant roles), the active role of the social actor in question is most clearly foregrounded; note how, in examples 4.1 and 4.2, active roles are realised by participation, passive roles in other, more highly transformed ways. But activation can also be realised in other ways, for example through ‘circumstantialisation’, that is by prepositional circumstantials with *by* or *from*, as with ‘from neighbours and co-workers’ in:

4.5 People of Asian descent suddenly received a cold-shoulder from neighbours and co-workers.

Premodification (e.g. ‘public’ in ‘public support’) or postmodification (e.g. ‘of Asians’ in ‘the influx of Asians’) of nominalisations or process nouns can also realise activation. A frequent form of this is ‘possessivation’, the use of a possessive pronoun to activate (e.g. ‘our intake’) or passivate (e.g. ‘my teacher’) a social actor. By comparison to participation this backgrounds agency, changing it into the ‘possession’ of a process which has itself been transformed into a ‘thing’.

Passivation necessitates a further distinction: the passivated social actor can be *subjected* or *beneficialised*. Subjected social actors are treated as objects in the representation, for instance as objects of exchange (immigrants ‘taken in’ in return for the skill or the money they bring). Beneficialised social actors form a third party which, positively or negatively, benefits from it. In 4.6, for instance, ‘about 70,000 migrants’ are subjected to the activity of ‘bringing in’; in 4.7 ‘cities like Vancouver’ are beneficialised in relation to ‘bringing’:

4.6 *Australia was bringing in about 70,000 migrants a year.*

4.7 *22,000 Hong Kong Chinese arrived last year, bringing bulging wallets to cities like Vancouver.*

There is a cryptogrammatical criterion for considering both these roles passivations: Goals as well as Beneficiaries can become subjects in passive clauses. But there is of course also a grammatical criterion for distinguishing them: Beneficiaries can take a preposition (although they do not have to: see Halliday, 1985:132ff), Goals cannot (with the exception of very few cases, such as ‘What did John do with the dinner?’).

Like activation, subjection can be realised in various ways. It is realised by ‘participation’ when the passivated social actor is Goal in a material process, Phenomenon in a mental process, or Carrier in an effective attributive process (Halliday, 1985:143)—‘African street vendors’ in 4.4 is an example. It can also be realised by ‘circumstantialisation’ through a prepositional phrase with, for instance, *against*, as in 4.8, where ‘ethnic Asians’ are passivated:

4.8 *A racist backlash against ethnic Asians has been unleashed by those who resent the prominence of centrist candidate Alberto Fujimori.*

And it can also be realised by ‘possessivation’, usually in the form of a prepositional phrase with *of* postmodifying a nominalisation or process noun, as with ‘of some 54,000 skilled immigrants’ in 4.9:

4.9 *An intake of some 54,000 skilled immigrants is expected this year.*

Finally, adjectival premodification can also passivate, as, for example, with ‘racial’ in ‘racial tolerance’, where (people of different) races are passivated; the example also *abstracts* the social actors represented.

Beneficialisation may be realised either by participation, in which case the beneficialised participant is Recipient or Client in relation to a material process, or Receiver in relation to a verbal process (Halliday, 1985:132–3). Table 3.2 shows how the ‘Race Odyssey’ text allocates roles to the most frequently represented social actors.

It is clear that ‘racists’, ‘government’ and ‘us’ most often act upon the immigrants, be it materially or symbolically, and that the immigrants themselves are activated only, or almost only, in relation to one action, the act of immigrating (‘influx’, ‘arriving’, etc.), and this mostly in nominalised and deeply embedded form.

Table 3.2 Role allocation in the 'Race Odyssey' text

	<i>Activated</i> %	<i>Subjected</i> %	<i>Beneficialised</i> %
'racists' (N=21)	81	14	5
'us' (N=40)	85	12.5	2.5
'them' (N=66)	53	45	2
'government' (N=29)	86	7	7

5 GENERICISATION AND SPECIFICATION

The choice between generic and specific reference is another important factor in the representation of social actors; they can be represented as classes or as specific, identifiable individuals. Compare, for instance, the following two texts:

5.1. The reference is specific since we have in mind specific specimens of the class tiger.

(Quirk *et al.*, 1972:147)

5.2. Classification is an instrument of control in two directions: control over the flux of experience of physical and social reality...and society's control over conceptions of that reality.

(Kress and Hodge, 1979:63)

The first example betrays a view of reality in which generalised essences, classes, constitute the real, and in which specific participants are 'specimens' of those classes. In the second example the real is constituted by the 'flux of experience', by a specific, concrete world, populated with specific, concrete people, places, things and actions, and 'classification' is seen as an operation upon this reality, which creates a kind of second order reality, a 'conception of reality'.

Sociologists have linked such concepts of reality to social class. For Bourdieu (1986) concrete reference to immediate experience is linked to the habitus of the working class, that is, to the principles that lie behind their appreciation of art, music and literature, behind their moral and political judgements and so on. 'Distance, height, the overview of the observer who places himself above the hurly-burly' (Bourdieu, 1986:444), on the other hand, is linked to the habitus of the dominant class, the bourgeoisie, and Bourdieu approvingly quotes Virginia Woolf's dictum

that ‘general ideas are always Generals’ ideas’. From this perspective, he says, specific reference is a ‘blind, narrow, partial vision’ (Bourdieu, 1986:444). In a similar vein, Bernstein (e.g. 1971:197) has argued that ‘elaborated codes’ give access to ‘universalistic orders of meaning’, while restricted codes give access to ‘particularistic orders of meaning’, and that access to these codes is class-determined.

The difference can be observed, for instance, in the way that social actors are represented by different sectors of the press. In middle-class oriented newspapers government agents and experts tend to be referred to specifically, and ‘ordinary people’ generically: the point of identification, the world in which one’s specifics exist, is here, not the world of the governed, but the world of the governors, the ‘generals’. In working-class oriented newspapers, on the other hand, ‘ordinary people’ are frequently referred to specifically. The following two examples illustrate the difference. They deal with the same topic and the articles from which they are taken appeared on the same day, their news value deriving from the same statement by Australia’s Minister for Sport and Recreation. The first comes from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, a middle-class oriented newspaper, the second from the *Daily Telegraph*, a working-class oriented newspaper:

5.3 Australia has one of the highest childhood drowning rates in the world, with children under 5 making up a quarter of the toll, this is the grim news from Government studies of Australia’s high incidence of drowning. The studies show over 500 people drown in Australia every year, with backyard swimming pools the biggest killers for children under 15. The Minister for Sport and Recreation, Mr Brown, said the childhood drowning rate was higher than developed countries such as Britain and the US and comparable with many Asian countries. He said children should be encouraged to swim and parents should learn resuscitation techniques.

5.4 The tragic drowning of a toddler in a backyard swimming pool has mystified his family. Matthew Harding, two, one of twin boys, had to climb over a one-metre ‘child-proof fence before he fell into the pool. Mrs Desley Harding found Matthew floating in the pool when she went to call the twins in for tea yesterday. ‘I have got no idea how he got in the pool, said Mrs Harding at her home in Wentworthville South today.

Genericisation may be realised by the plural without article, as in 5.5:

5.5 Non-European immigrants make up 6.5 per cent of the population.

and it may also be realised by the singular with a definite article (5.6) or indefinite article (5.7):

5.6 Allow the child to cling to something familiar during times of distress.

5.7 Maybe a child senses that from her mother.

If mass nouns are used for generic reference to a group of participants, the article will be absent, but this form can also be used for specific reference: generic reference is clearly dependent on a complex of factors, including also tense, and 5.8 has been interpreted as specific mainly because of the absence of habitual or universal present tense:

5.8 Staff in both playgroups and nurseries expressed willingness to supply information if asked and regretted that their opinions were not valued more.

The presence of a Numerative, finally, has been interpreted as realising specific reference.

Even though one expects a certain amount of generic reference in a general argument, which is what the ‘Race Odyssey’ text purports to be, this does not mean that all categories of social actor are equally often genericised. ‘Racists’ in other countries, and ‘them’, the immigrants, are genericised most often (32 and 48 per cent respectively) and so symbolically removed from the readers’ world of immediate experience, treated as distant ‘others’ rather than as people ‘we’ have to deal with in our everyday lives. The ‘government’ and ‘us’, on the other hand, are less often genericised (17 and 15 per cent respectively).

6 ASSIMILATION

Social actors can be referred to as individuals, in which case I shall speak of *individualisation*, or as groups, in which case I shall speak of *assimilation*. Given the great value which is placed on individuality in many spheres of our society (and the value placed on conformity in others) these categories would have to be of primary significance in Critical Discourse Analysis. Examples 5.3 and 5.4 already showed that middle-class oriented newspapers tend to individualise elite persons and assimilate ‘ordinary people’, while working-class oriented newspapers quite often individualise ‘ordinary people’. In my study of ‘schooling texts’ (van Leeuwen, 1993b) I analysed an item from the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) radio programme ‘Offspring’, which deals with issues of interest to parents. One of the expert panellists in the programme made an explicit plea for individualisation, but—experts will be experts, and schools schools—individualisation was, itself, assimilated. The children, despite the emphasis on difference, were represented as groups:

6.1 However you manipulate the age of entry into school, you are always going to have the situation where you have children of different kinds of development and with different skills coming into a school programme. And the important thing is to make sure that the programme is adapted to meet the needs of all these children coming in.

I shall distinguish two major kinds of assimilation, *aggregation* and *collectivisation*. The former quantifies groups of participants, treating them as ‘statistics’, the latter does not. Aggregation plays a crucial role in many contexts. In our society the majority rules, not just in contexts in which formal democratic procedures are used to arrive at decisions, but also and especially in others, through mechanisms such as opinion polls, surveys, marketing research, etc. Even legislative reform is increasingly based on ‘what most people consider legitimate’. For this reason aggregation is often used to regulate practice and to manufacture consensus opinion, even though it presents itself as merely recording facts. Example 6.2 can be seen as an instance of this use of aggregation:

6.2 This concern, the report noted, was reflected in surveys which showed that the level of support for stopping migration altogether was at a postwar high.

Individualisation is realised by singularity, and assimilation by plurality, as with ‘Australians’ and ‘Muslims’ in 6.3:

6.3 Australians tend to be sceptical about admitting ‘Muslims’.

Alternatively, assimilation may be realised by a mass noun or a noun denoting a group of people, as, for instance, with ‘this nation’ in 6.4 and ‘the community’ in 6.5:

6.4 Is he [i.e. Prime Minister Hawke] entitled to believe that this nation, which only recently shed the White Australia Policy, is somehow impervious to racist sentiment?

6.5 The 250,000-strong Sikh community has pressed for the right to have Mounties in turbans.

Aggregation is realised by the presence of definite or indefinite quantifiers, which either function as the Numerative or as the Head of the nominal group, as with ‘a number of critics’ in 6.6 and ‘forty per cent of Australians’ in 6.7:

6.6 *A number of critics want to see our intake halved to 70,000.*

6.7 *Forty per cent of Australians were born overseas.*

The 'Race Odyssey' text individualises 'racists' and 'immigrants' only when they are also elite persons (Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the mayor of Kawaguchi, and the presidential candidate (son of immigrants) from Peru, the only 'immigrant' in this category). The individualisation of racism within Australia, in the person of Bruce Ruxton, 'our racist', shows that, in the press, notoriety confers as much elite status as does high office.

'We', the people of Australia, are of course mostly collectivised, not only through the first person plural, but also through terms like 'Australia', 'this nation', 'the community', etc. The government, on the other hand, is mostly individualised—the leader as a strong individual, the people as a homogeneous, consensual group.

'Experts' are collectivised ('the committee', 'surveys'), which helps to signal their agreement. In the remainder of the article, however, they are often individualised, which allows their titles, credentials and institutional affiliations to be showcased.

As indicated already, immigrants are most frequently aggregated, treated as 'statistics', and rather than that this is used to realise frequency modality (as in 'many Australians'), it makes them not only the object of 'rational' economic calculation, but also that large horde 'legitimately feared' by Australians.

7 ASSOCIATION AND DISSOCIATION

There is another way in which social actors can be represented as groups: *association*. Association, in the sense in which I shall use the term here, refers to groups formed by social actors and/or groups of social actors (either generically or specifically referred to) which are never labelled in the text (although the actors or groups who make up the association may of course themselves be named and/or categorised). The most common realisation of association is parataxis, as in this example:

7.1 *They believed that the immigration program existed for the benefit of politicians, bureaucrats, and the ethnic minorities, not for Australians as a whole.*

Here 'politicians, bureaucrats and ethnic minorities' are associated to form a group opposed to the interests of 'Australians as a whole'. But, rather than being represented as stable and institutionalised, the group is represented as an alliance which exists only in relation to a specific

activity or set of activities, in this case their beneficiary role in relation to immigration.

Association may also be realised by ‘circumstances of accompaniment’ (Halliday, 1985:141), as in:

7.2 They played ‘higher and higher’ with the other children.

In this case the association is, perhaps, even more fleeting and unstable.

Possessive pronouns and possessive attributive clauses with verbs like ‘have’ and ‘belong’ can make an association explicit without naming the resulting social grouping. In this case, however, the association is represented as more stable and enduring, and, indeed, ‘possessive’, as in this example, where ‘problems’ is clearly an abstract reference to a specific kind of immigrant: with other kinds of immigrants an association may be formed, with this kind of immigrant it must be ‘avoided’:

7.3 We have avoided most of the problems that bedevil Western Europe because few of our non-European migrants have been poor, black, unskilled, Muslim or illegal.

In many texts associations are formed and unformed (‘dissociation’) as the text proceeds. In one children’s story I studied, for instance, there existed, prior to entering school for the first time, an association between two children from the same neighbourhood. As they walked to school and shared their worries, they were always referred to as ‘Mark and Mandy’. But the association was disbanded as soon as they entered the classroom. From that moment they were referred to either separately, or as part of the collective of the ‘class’.

There are only a few associations in the ‘Race Odyssey’ text: the lines between the parties are sharply drawn. Two of the associations lump different ethnic origins together (‘Asia and the Middle East’, ‘Lebanese, Turks and Vietnamese’), another associates the ‘neighbours and co-workers’ who give ‘ethnic Asians’ the cold-shoulder. The cases of ‘our non-European migrants’, ‘politicians, bureaucrats and ethnic minorities’ I have already mentioned.

8 INDETERMINATION AND DIFFERENTIATION

Indetermination occurs when social actors are represented as unspecified, ‘anonymous’ individuals or groups, *determination* when their identity is, one way or another, specified. Indetermination is typically realised by indefinite pronouns (‘somebody’, ‘someone’, ‘some’, ‘some people’) used in nominal function, as in this example from a children’s book, where a member of the school support staff is indetermined:

8.1 *Someone had put flowers on the teacher's desk.*

Here indetermination *anonymises* a social actor. The writer treats his or her identity as irrelevant to the reader. Indetermination can also be realised by generalised exophoric reference, and in this case it endows social actors with a kind of impersonal authority, a sense of unseen, yet powerfully felt coercive force:

8.2 *They won't let you go to school until you're five years old.*

Indetermination can also be aggregated, as, for example, in: 'many believe ...', 'some say...', etc.

Differentiation explicitly differentiates an individual social actor or group of social actors from a similar actor or group, creating the difference between the 'self' and the 'other', or between 'us' and 'them', as with 'others' in:

8.3 *And though many of the new migrants are educated high-achievers from places like Singapore and Hong Kong—'uptown' people in American terminology—others are 'downtown' people from places like Vietnam, the Philippines and Lebanon.*

There are only two cases of this in the 'Race Odyssey' text, the one just quoted, and the 'other community leaders' (i.e. other than 'politicians and bureaucrats').

When I compared middle-class oriented and mass-market oriented children's stories about the 'first day at school' (van Leeuwen, 1993b), I found that differentiation plays an important role in the former, but does not occur much in the latter. Middle-class children are apparently encouraged to see themselves as individuals, different from 'the other children', and much of the trauma of 'the first day', as represented in these stories, consists in a kind of identity crisis, the child's discovery that she is not unique:

8.4 *Mummy, did you know there is another Mary in my class?*

The readers of the mass-market oriented stories, on the other hand, are encouraged to take pleasure in their ability to conform successfully.

9 NOMINATION AND CATEGORISATION

Social actors can be represented either in terms of their unique identity, by being *nominated*, or in terms of identities and functions they share with others (*categorisation*), and it is, again, always of interest to investigate

which social actors are, in a given discourse, categorised and which nominated. In stories, for instance, nameless characters fulfil only passing, functional roles, and do not become points of identification for the reader or listener. In press ‘stories’ something similar occurs. We saw, for instance, how a middle-class newspaper nominated only a high-status person, a government minister, while a working-class oriented newspaper, in an article on the same topic, nominated ‘ordinary people’ (examples 5.3 and 5.4). The press, and not only the press, also tends to nominate men and women in different ways (cf. the types of nomination discussed below). The following sets of examples were taken from the same *Guardian* articles:

9.1 *Dwight Harris, aged 32...his wife Beverley, aged 33.*

9.2 *Carole Maychill, a 32-year-old captain... Colonel Robert Pepper.*

Nomination is typically realised by proper nouns, which can be *formal* (surname only, with or without honorifics), *semi-formal* (given name and surname, as with ‘Dwight Harris’ in 9.1) or *informal* (given name only, as with ‘Beverley’ in 9.1). Occasionally what we might call ‘name obscuration’ occurs: letters or numbers replace names (e.g. ‘Mr X’) so that nomination can be signified while the name is, at the same time, withheld. All nominations can be used as vocatives and do not occur with a possessive pronoun, except in contexts of special endearment (e.g. ‘My Cathy...’) at least in English—in other languages the possessive pronoun does not necessarily suggest special endearment (cf. the French ‘Mon Capitaine’, ‘Mon Général’).

Items other than proper names may be used for nomination, especially when, in a given context, only one social actor occupies a certain rank or fulfils a certain function. Nominations of this kind in fact blur the dividing line between nomination and categorisation. They are common in stories for young children, with characters referred to as ‘The Little Boy’, ‘The Giant’, ‘Rabbit’, etc., even in vocatives:

9.3 *Turkish Sultan, give me back my diamond button.*

Nominations may be titled, either in the form of honorification, the addition of standard titles, ranks, etc. as with ‘Dr’ in 9.4, or in the form of affiliations, the addition of a personal or kinship relation term, as with ‘Auntie Barbara’ in 9.5:

9.4 *In 50 years, Dr Price says, 26 per cent of the Australian population will be Asian.*

9.5 They started out, Auntie Barbara pushing Debbie in her pram.

Press journalists often use what Bell (1985:98) has called ‘pseudo titles’, such as ‘controversial cancer therapist Milan Brych’. As in standard titles, the definite article is absent in such pseudo titles, but otherwise categorisation and nomination are mixed here, or rather, categorisations are used as unique identities, much as in the children’s stories quote above.

The ‘Race Odyssey’ text nominates heads of government (Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, Prime Minister Bob Hawke), ‘our racist’ Bruce Ruxton, ‘experts’ (especially in the section that follows the excerpt in section 2 above, where four different experts are quoted extensively, all in favour of cutting back immigration, and all nominated and titled), and the writer, who thereby places himself in high company. Not nominated (and absences are as significant in critical discourse analysis as presences) are ‘racists’ in other countries, ‘us’ Australians, and, of course, the immigrants, with the exception of that high-status immigrants’ son, Alberto Fujimori, the Peruvian presidential candidate.

10 FUNCTIONALISATION AND IDENTIFICATION

I shall distinguish two key types of categorisation, *functionalisation* and *identification*. Functionalisation occurs when social actors are referred to in terms of an activity, in terms of something they do, for instance an occupation or role. It is typically realised in one of the following ways: first, by a noun, formed from a verb, through suffixes such as *-er*, *-ant*, *-ent*, *-ian*, *-ee*, e.g. ‘interviewer’, ‘celebrant’, ‘correspondent’, ‘guardian’, ‘payee’; second, by a noun formed from another noun which denotes a place or tool closely associated with an activity (a noun which, in Halliday’s terms (1985:134ff) forms the ‘Range’ of that activity) through suffixes such as *-ist*, *-eer*, e.g. ‘pianist’, ‘mountaineer’; third, by the compounding of nouns denoting places or tools closely associated with an activity and highly generalised categorisations such as ‘man’, ‘woman’, ‘person’, ‘people’ (occasionally functionalisations such as ‘assistant’), as in ‘cameraman’, ‘chairperson’.

Identification occurs when social actors are defined, not in terms of what they do, but in terms of what they, more or less permanently, or unavoidably, are. I have distinguished three types: *classification*, *relational identification* and *physical identification*.

In the case of classification, social actors are referred to in terms of the major categories by means of which a given society or institution differentiates between classes of people. In our society these include age, gender, provenance, class, wealth, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and so on. But classification categories are historically and culturally variable. What in one period or culture is represented as ‘doing’,

as a more or less impermanent role, may in another be represented as 'being', as a more or less fixed identity. Foucault (1981) has described how, in the late nineteenth century, the discourse of sexology introduced a new classification category, 'sexual orientation'. Social actors who previously were functionalised ('sodomites') were now, increasingly, classified:

Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species.

(Foucault, 1981:42)

At present the category of 'belonging to a company or organisation' begins to play a more important role in identification (cf. 'a Warwick University scientist', 'a Hambro Countrywide Chain spokesman').

The extent to which functionalisation and classification are distinct is also historically and culturally variable. Sociological role theory goes a long way in blurring the two types of categorisation:

Every role in society has attached to it a certain identity. As we have seen, some of these identities are trivial and temporary ones, as in some occupations that demand little modification in the being of their practitioners. It is not difficult to change from garbage collector to night watchman. It is considerably more difficult to change from clergyman to officer. It is very, very difficult to change from negro to white. And it is almost impossible to change from man to woman. These differences in the ease of role changing ought not to blind us to the fact that even identities we consider to be our essential selves have been socially assigned.

(P.L.Berger, 1966:115)

Psychological or psychologising discourses, on the other hand, stress the boundaries strongly, as in this question from interviewer Caroline Jones's series of Australian Broadcasting Commission radio programmes *The Search for Meaning*:

So what would you want to say about that split we seem to have made in our habit of thinking between that which we are (our being) and how we value that; and our doing, all our performance, our work? There's a real split there, isn't there, in our society.

(Jones, 1989:136)

Do we have an identity beneath the many roles we play? Or is our identity the sum of the roles we have learnt to play? My concern here is not to solve this problem, but to point out that the English language allows us to make a choice between functionalisation and identification, and that the use of this choice in discourse is of critical importance for discourse analysis.

That the choice has a grammatical base, a base in the language itself, can be seen from the rank order of the two types of categorisation in nominal groups. Identifications can be, and frequently are, Classifiers in nominal groups, functionalisations only rarely. One can, for example, say 'the Asian teacher', 'the homosexual musician', 'the woman doctor', but not (or only in a derogatory sense) 'the teacher Asian', 'the musician homosexual', 'the doctor woman'. Only relational identifications (see below) occasionally allow functionalisations to become Classifiers, as, for example, in 'your teacher friend'. Also, classifications and physical identifications cannot be possessivated, except, again, in a derogatory sense (cf. my use of 'our racist'). Relational identifications, on the other hand, are almost always possessivated. But possessivation does not play the same role here as in functionalisation: possessivated functionalisations signify the activation (as in 'his victim') or subjection (as in 'my attacker') of the possessing participant, while possessivated relational identifications signify the 'belonging together', the 'relationality' of the possessivated and possessing social actors (as in 'my daughter' or 'my mother').

Relational identification represents social actors in terms of their personal, kinship or work relation to each other, and it is realised by a closed set of nouns denoting such relations: 'friend', 'aunt', 'colleague', etc. Typically they are possessivated, either by means of a possessive pronoun ('her friend'), or by means of a genitive ('the child's mother'), or postmodifying prepositional phrase with *of* ('a mother of five').

The role of relational identification is, in our society, less important than that of classification and functionalisation, especially where personal and kinship relations are concerned. The intrusion of such relations into the sphere of public activities may be branded as 'nepotism' or 'corruption' (unless you are a monarch). In other societies, however, it plays a key role. Von Sturmer (1981) has described how Australian Aborigines, when they first meet, introduce themselves primarily in terms of relational identification. They 'search for relations whom they share and then establish their relationship on that basis' (1981:13). This differs from western introductions, where nomination and functionalisation ('What do you do?') are the key to establishing a relation, and where classification ('Where are you from?') comes in only when a social actor displays signs of differing from the social norm, for instance a foreign accent, or a dark skin. Not so among Aborigines:

- Mareeba man: 'Where you from?'
Mickey: 'I'm Edward River man. Where you from?'
Mareeba man: 'I'm Lama Lama man...do you know X?'
Mickey: 'No. Do you know Y?'
Mareeba man: 'No. Do you know Z?'
Mickey: 'Yes, she's my auntie.'

Mareeba man: 'That old lady's my granny. I must call you daddy.'
 Mickey: 'I must call you boy. You give me a cigarette.'
 (von Sturmer, 1981:13)

Where kinship relations continue to be functionally important in our society, as is the case especially with the relation between mothers and children, the relevant terms become polyvalent: 'mother' can be used as a functionalisation ('mothering' is not the act of bringing a child into the world, but the act of giving care to a child, while 'fathering' signifies only the act of begetting a child!), as a nomination ('Mother...') and as a relational identification ('my mother...'); similarly, 'child' can be a classification as well as a relational identification.

We might also note that, by the criteria developed here, terms like 'lover' and 'caregiver' (as synonym for 'parent') introduce a measure of functionalisation into the sphere of personal and kinship relations. Projections of the future development of personal and kinship relations in our society, such as those in Alvin Toffler's *Futureshock* (1970) do indeed predict increasing functionalisation, for example the institutionalisation of 'professional families', couples bringing up other people's children for money, to allow these children's parents to devote themselves to their careers.

Physical identification represents social actors in terms of physical characteristics which uniquely identify them in a given context. It can be realised by nouns denoting physical characteristics ('blonde', 'redhead', 'cripple', and so on) or by adjectives ('bearded', 'tall') or prepositional phrases with *with* or *without* postmodifying highly generalised classifications such as 'man', 'woman', etc.:

10.1 *A little girl with a long, fair pigtail came and stood next to Mary Kate.*

10.2 *'What are you doing there?', shouted the man with the large moustache.*

Physical identification occurs a good deal in stories, sometimes only when a character is introduced, as in 10.1, sometimes throughout, as in the story from which 10.2 is taken. It provides social actors with a unique identity in the temporary or permanent absence of nomination, and does so by means of a salient detail. But it also, and at the same time, focuses the reader or listener on the social actor's physical characteristics, and this may be done selectively, for instance on the basis of age or gender, as in these examples from the (Australian) *Daily Mirror*: 'stunning blonde singer Toby Bishop', 'chubby-cheeked Laura Vezey, 2'.

In contrast to nomination, physical identification is always overdetermined

(see section 12): physical attributes tend to have connotations, and these can be used to obliquely classify or functionalise social actors. ‘Large moustaches’, for example (see example 10.2), derive, perhaps, from the moustaches of Prussian army officers, connoting a sense of rigid disciplinarianism, not only in armies and schools, but also in other contexts. The borderline between physical identification and classification is therefore far from clearcut, as is obvious from the use of skin colour for classification, or from the connotations that cling to such representations of women as ‘blonde’ or ‘redhead’. However, even when used for the purposes of classification, the category of physical identification remains distinct, because of its obliqueness, its overdetermination, and its apparent ‘empirical’ innocence.

Finally, social actors can be referred to in interpersonal, rather than experiential terms. For these instances I use the term appraisal: social actors are appraised when they are referred to in terms which evaluate them, as good or bad, loved or hated, admired or pitied. This is realised by the set of nouns and idioms that denote such appraisal (and only such appraisal), as, for instance, ‘the darling’, ‘the bastard’, ‘the wretch’—or ‘thugs’ in:

10.3 80 young white thugs attacked African street vendors.

It would appear, incidentally, that negative appraisements are more plentiful than positive ones, especially in some registers, such as that spoken by Miles Davis in his ghostwritten autobiography:

10.4 I told the motherfucker as he was going out of the door ‘I told you not to go in there, stupid’.

(Davis, 1990:13)

As can be expected, the ‘Race Odyssey’ text does not categorise the individuals and groups it represents to the same degree. ‘Racists’ and ‘immigrants’ are categorised a good deal more than are ‘we’, Australians. And when ‘we’ are categorised, it is in terms of our shared national identity (‘Australians’)—the single instance of functionalisation is ‘critics’.

‘Racists’ are classified by provenance and ethnicity (‘Japanese’, ‘native Vancouverites’, etc.) and in one case by age and race (the case of the ‘young white thugs’). ‘Immigrants’ are classified by provenance or ethnicity in 50 per cent of cases, by class (e.g. the ‘downtown’ and ‘uptown’ immigrants) in 20 per cent of cases, by race (‘dark-skinned’, ‘black’) in 13 per cent of cases, by education or skilledness in 10 per cent of cases, and once each by wealth (‘poor’) and religion (‘Muslim’). By and large their treatment in the representation is not all that different from that

of the ‘racists’. ‘Racists’ and ‘immigrants’ also are the only categories of social actor that are occasionally represented in terms of relational identity. Both constitute, in this discourse, the main ‘others’ for ‘us’, Australians, and therefore also the main object of classification.

High-status social actors, on the other hand, such as ‘government’ and ‘experts’, are always functionalised (the few instances of functionalisation of ‘racists’ and ‘immigrants’ also concern high-status persons, such as the ‘mayor of Kawaguchi’ and the Peruvian presidential candidate. It is a pattern which, I would think, is by no means specific to this text.

11 PERSONALISATION AND IMPERSONALISATION

So far I have discussed representational choices which *personalise* social actors, represent them as human beings, as realised by personal or possessive pronouns, proper names or nouns (sometimes adjectives, as, for example, in ‘maternal care’) whose meaning includes the feature ‘human’. But social actors can also be *impersonalised*, represented by other means, for instance by abstract nouns, or by concrete nouns whose meaning does not include the semantic feature ‘human’. I shall distinguish two types of impersonalisation: abstraction and objectivation. Abstraction occurs when social actors are represented by means of a quality assigned to them by the representation. One example is the way in which ‘poor, black, unskilled, Muslim or illegal’ migrants are referred to by means of the term ‘problems’ in 11.1: they are being assigned the quality of being problematic, and this quality is then used to denote them. Another example is the substitution of ‘the changing face of Australia’ for ‘the new migrants’ in 11.2:

11.1 Australia is in danger of saddling itself up with a lot of unwanted problems.

11.2 Many Australians...were ‘bewildered’ by the changing face of Australia.

Objectivation occurs when social actors are represented by means of reference to a place or thing closely associated either with their person or with the activity they are represented as being engaged in. In other words, objectivation is realised by metonymical reference. A number of types of objectivation are particularly common: *spatialisation*, *utterance autonomisation*, *instrumentalisation* and *somatisation*.

Spatialisation is a form of objectivation in which social actors are represented by means of reference to a place with which they are, in the given context, closely associated. This happens, for instance, when ‘Australians’ are substituted by ‘Australia’, as in 11.3:

11.3 Australia was bringing in about 70,000 migrants a year.

Utterance autonomisation is a form of objectivation in which social actors are represented by means of reference to their utterances. This is the case, for instance, with ‘the report’ and ‘surveys’ in 11.4, and because it lends a kind of impersonal authority to the utterances, it is often used in connection with the utterances of high-status and ‘official’ spokespeople:

11.4 This concern, the report noted, was reflected in surveys which showed that the level of support for stopping immigration altogether was at a postwar high.

Instrumentalisation is a form of objectivation in which social actors are represented by means of reference to the instrument with which they carry out the activity which they are represented as being engaged in:

11.5 A 120 mm mortar shell slammed into Sarajevo’s marketplace.

Somatisation, finally, is a form of objectivation in which social actors are represented by means of reference to a part of their body, as in:

11.6 She put her hand on Mary Kate’s shoulder.

The noun denoting the body part is almost always premodified by a possessive pronoun or genitive referring to the ‘owner’ of the body part, and perhaps we should, in such cases, speak of ‘semi-objectivation’. Nevertheless, possessivated somatisation still adds a touch of alienation, of Mary Kate not being involved herself: not Mary Kate, but Mary Kate’s *body* is being touched, in an unwanted and intimidating intrusion.

More generally, impersonalisation can have one or more of the following effects: it can background the identity and/or role of social actors; it can lend impersonal authority or force to an activity or quality of a social actor; and it can add positive or negative connotations to an activity or utterance of a social actor. When, for instance, ‘Australia’ is activated in relation to the activity of ‘bringing in migrants’ (example 11.3), the text does not tell the reader who is responsible for the activity, just as in the case of nominalisations and passive agent deletions. For this reason impersonalisation abounds in the language of bureaucracy, a form of the organisation of human activity which is constituted on the denial of responsibility, and governed by impersonal procedures which, once put in place, are wellnigh impermeable to human agency. Abstractions, finally, add connotative meanings: the qualities abstracted from their bearers serve, in part, to interpret and evaluate them.

The ‘Race Odyssey’ text impersonalises ‘immigrants’ often (eighteen

times), most of the other categories of social actor only rarely—‘racists’ are impersonalised once, ‘us’, Australians three times, the ‘government’ once, and ‘experts’ twice. The writer of the article, on the other hand, impersonalises himself every time he refers to his activities (‘italicising’, ‘highlighting’, ‘calling into question’, etc.) and the only personalised reference to him is the byline (‘David Jenkins argues...’).

Most of the impersonalisations of ‘immigrants’ are abstractions (83 per cent), and what is abstracted is, in eight out of fifteen cases, quantity: ‘immigrants’ are referred to as ‘levels’, ‘settings’, etc. The qualities of being ‘problematic’ (see 11.1), of ‘changing Australia’ (11.2) and of ‘race’ (as in ‘racial tolerance’) account for the other cases.

Utterance autonomisation occurs in relation to ‘experts’ and also in relation to the writer of the article, who represents himself every single time as though, through his person, ‘the facts speak for themselves’, as realised by the substitution of anaphoric reference to preceding sections of text for reference to his person:

11.7 They [i.e. these developments] highlight the fact that racism is seldom far below the surface.

12 OVERDETERMINATION

Overdetermination occurs when social actors are represented as participating, at the same time, in more than one social practice. One of the children’s stories that I analysed, a Dutch story called *De Metro van Magnus* (van Leeuwen, 1981), features a character called ‘The Unknown Soldier’. Magnus, the hero of the story, finds The Unknown Soldier (who is ‘maybe 18 years old’ but ‘looks more like a boy than like a man’) in the Unknown Soldier Square, where he sits, rather forlorn, at the foot of a huge abstract monument dedicated to The Unknown Soldier. As this monument bears little resemblance to a soldier, Magnus assumes that the ‘man-boy’ must be The Unknown Soldier. The latter, after some hesitation, agrees. He is glad to get a name, because he himself does not know who he is (he is ‘unknown’). Magnus and The Unknown Soldier then go to a place ‘rather like a school’, where The Unknown Soldier fails miserably at answering the questions asked by ‘the man with the large moustache’ (already featured in example 10.2). Thus The Unknown Soldier is connected to at least two social practices, warfare and schooling, and comes to symbolise the subjected participant in both these practices, and indeed in all practices that produce victims and underdogs. Magnus’s own name is also overdetermined, since he is both little, a child, and ‘magnus’: through his name he transcends the difference between ‘what adults (can) do’ and ‘what children (can) do’.

I have distinguished four major categories of overdetermination: *inversion*, *symbolisation*, *connotation* and *distillation*.

Inversion is a form of overdetermination in which social actors are connected to two practices which are, in a sense, each other's opposites. This happens, for instance, in the well-known comic strip *The Flintstones*. The activities of the Flintstones are very much those of a twentieth-century American suburban family. The Flintstones themselves, however, are overdetermined: they *do* things twentieth-century families do, but they *look like*, and are nominated as, prehistoric cavedwellers. In other words, they have been transformed from [+contemporary] to [-contemporary]—while still involved in contemporary activities. Reference thus broadens to include prehistoric as well as contemporary practices, perhaps in order that the latter may be viewed as 'natural', as transcending history and culture: overdetermination is one of the ways in which texts can legitimise practices. The 'Magnus' example above is also a case of inversion: Magnus has been transformed from [+child] to [-child], while still involved in childlike activities.

Symbolisation, as I use the term here, occurs when a 'fictional' social actor or group of social actors stands for actors or groups in non-fictional social practices. The 'fictional' actor often belongs to a mythical, distant past. This distance then allows the actors and the activities in which they engage to refer to several non-fictional actors and practices. Will Wright (1975), in a study of Westerns, has shown how the participants and activities in Westerns changed in the early 1960s towards a pattern which he calls the 'professional plot'. Characteristic of this kind of plot is the transition from individualisation (the lone gunfighter who arrives in town on his horse) to collectivisation, the team of fiercely independent men who work for money rather than for love, justice or honour, are technically competent and highly organised, and form a tightly knit elite with a strong code of solidarity within the group. Wright then shows how these 'professional heroes' and their exploits can be linked to a number of social practices and the social actors involved in them, noting, for instance, how in business the individual entrepreneur has made way for the executive team, in science the individual genius for the efficient research team, and so on, and how the values of such teams are very similar to the values of the heroes of 'professional Westerns': here, too, one finds high technical competence, work for financial rewards, group solidarity against outsiders, and so on. Thus the 'professional heroes' in Westerns can stand for a variety of social actors in actual social practices: doctors, scientists, politicians, business executives, etc. The township, the 'weak society' for which the 'professional heroes' work, can stand for such social actors as the doctor's patients, the corporation's consumers, the politician's voters, etc. In other words, the social actors, and, indeed, the other elements of 'professional Westerns' are overdetermined. Bruno Bettelheim (1979) has similarly mapped the social actors and activities in fairy tales on to

contemporary and actual social practices, notably those of the modern middle-class family.

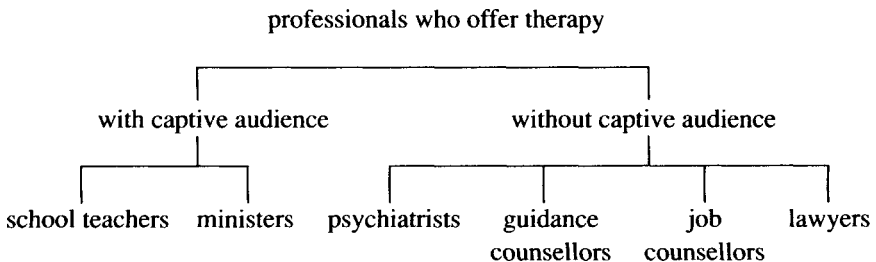
Connotation occurs when a unique determination (a nomination or physical identification) stands for a classification or functionalization. This definition essentially accords with the way Barthes (1967; 1970; 1977) defined ‘myth’ or ‘connotation’. Connotations, said Barthes (1977:50) are ‘discontinuous’, ‘scattered traits’, the knowledge of which is established by cultural tradition:

A ‘historical grammar’ of iconographic connotation ought thus to look for its material in painting, theatre, associations of ideas, stock metaphors, that is to say, precisely, in ‘culture’.

(Barthes, 1977:22)

We have already come across an example when we discussed the case of the ‘man with the large moustache’ (example 10.2): the reader’s knowledge of popular culture associates such moustaches with the Prussian military, and then projects into the ‘man with the large moustache’ all the qualities which the popular culture tradition associates with the Prussian military. Such knowledge is not necessarily conscious. It is ‘mythical’ knowledge. The signs ‘are not understandable, but merely reminiscent of cultural lessons half-learnt’ (J.Berger, 1972:140)—perhaps most frequently learnt from the mass media, movies, comic strips, and so on.

Distillation realises overdetermination through a combination of generalisation and abstraction. It is perhaps best explained by means of an example. A section of a chapter from Ivan Illich’s *Deschooling Society* (1971), which I have analysed in some detail elsewhere (van Leeuwen, 1993b), establishes, in the course of the text, the following taxonomy:



Three observations can be made about this taxonomy. First, while ‘psychiatrist’, and perhaps also ‘guidance counsellor’, can be seen as true hyponyms of ‘therapist’, the professions of ‘schoolteacher’, ‘minister’, ‘job counsellor’ and ‘lawyer’ are not usually classified as therapeutic. Practitioners may adopt some of the values and manners of therapists, but therapy is not a central aspect of their activities. In other words, Illich has

abstracted what would normally be regarded as peripheral qualities and then elevated them to the status of generalisations. This is borne out by the way he formulates the superordinate term: ‘professional’ can be regarded as a true generalisation of ‘schoolteachers’, ‘ministers’, etc., and it is this term which is used as Head of the nominal group.

Second, ‘therapy’ features only in the Qualifier of the nominal group. The term cannot, by itself, be used to refer to teachers. In other formulations Illich uses ‘therapist’ as Circumstance of Role (‘the teacher-as-therapist’)—again, ‘therapist’ is a circumstantial rather than a central feature. The same can be said for ‘with captive audience’ and ‘without captive audience’: in relation to ‘schoolteacher’, ‘minister’, etc. this is circumstantial, and hence an abstraction rather than a generalisation. One cannot say that schoolteachers are a kind of ‘with captive audience’.

Third, and most importantly in the present context, the taxonomy is not exhaustive. It is not constructed in order to chart the field of therapy, but in order to de-legitimise the activities of teachers by means of a comparison (the intrusion of fields other than those that form the main topic of a text for the sake of comparison always has a legitimising or de-legitimising function). Illich compares the activities of schoolteachers to the activities of ministers and priests. The church is an institution which, in the eyes of the ‘radical’ readers Illich is addressing, has already been de-legitimised long ago. The de-legitimation of schools, on the other hand, is a more controversial matter. Through overdetermining teachers, through connecting them to both school and church, some of the already achieved de-legitimation of the church can be transferred to the school, to teachers and their activities: ‘Children are protected by neither the First, nor the Fifth Amendment when they stand before that secular priest, the teacher’ (Illich, 1971:38).

Distillation, then, is a form of overdetermination which connects social actors to several social practices by abstracting the same feature from the social actors involved in these several practices.

Finally I shall briefly discuss the two most common forms of inversion, *anachronism* and *deviation*. Of the former we have already encountered an example, that of the Flintstones; science fiction can provide another example. Here social actors are projected into the future (and, perhaps, on to another planet as well)—but their activities often bear a remarkable resemblance to contemporary practices. Anachronism is often used to say things that cannot be said straightforwardly, for instance to offer social and political criticism in circumstances where this is proscribed by official or commercial censorship, or to naturalise ideological discourses.

In the case of deviation social actors involved in certain activities are represented by means of reference to social actors who would not normally be eligible to engage in these activities. In children’s stories about the first day at school, for instance, reference to children might be replaced by

reference to animals, a transformation of the feature [+human] into [-human]:

12.1 *The teacher wrote the name down in the register: NOIL.*

Then she finished calling the register.

'Betty Small', she said.

'Yes', said the little girl.

'Noil', said the teacher.

'Yes', said the lion. He sat next to the little girl, as good as gold.

This overdetermination fuses 'what children (can) do' and 'what animals (can) do', and so causes the child to be represented as, at the same time, human and animal, 'civilised' and 'uncivilised', and also as at the same time weak ('small', 'little') and strong. The deviation lies in the transgression of the rule that animals cannot go to school: more naturalistic stories about the first day at school invariably include the episode of the dog who wants to come to school too, but is not allowed to, and then feels sad and abandoned, while the child does not, or at least not initially, understand why his or her dog may not come to school. When, in a fantasy story like the one quoted in 12.1, animals transgress the eligibility rule and do go to school, they must necessarily fail. In the case of Noil, the lion, this does not happen, however, until after Noil has scared off the little boy who teases Betty Small in the playground.

Deviation almost always serves the purpose of legitimization: the failure of the deviant social actor confirms the norms. In the case of Noil and Betty Small it justifies the eligibility rule and so legitimises school as the necessary transition from a state of being in which children 'are at one with the animals', to a state of being in which they 'rise above animals', a state of being in which paradoxically, they are represented as 'small', 'little', and timid, rather than confident and assertive in their new status.

The 'Race Odyssey' text features only one overdetermination, the title, which overdetermines a process, rather than the social actors involved in it, the process of 'coming home after a long journey', of finding 'our' ('racial') identity. If I had chosen to exemplify my account of the representation of the social actors involved in the immigration process with a fictional example, I would probably have had a greater number of instances of overdetermination to discuss.

13 CONCLUSION

Figure 3.1 summarises, in the form of a system network, my answer to the question with which I started out: what are the principal ways in which social actors can be represented in discourse. The square brackets in the diagram stand for either/or choices (e.g. social actors must be either

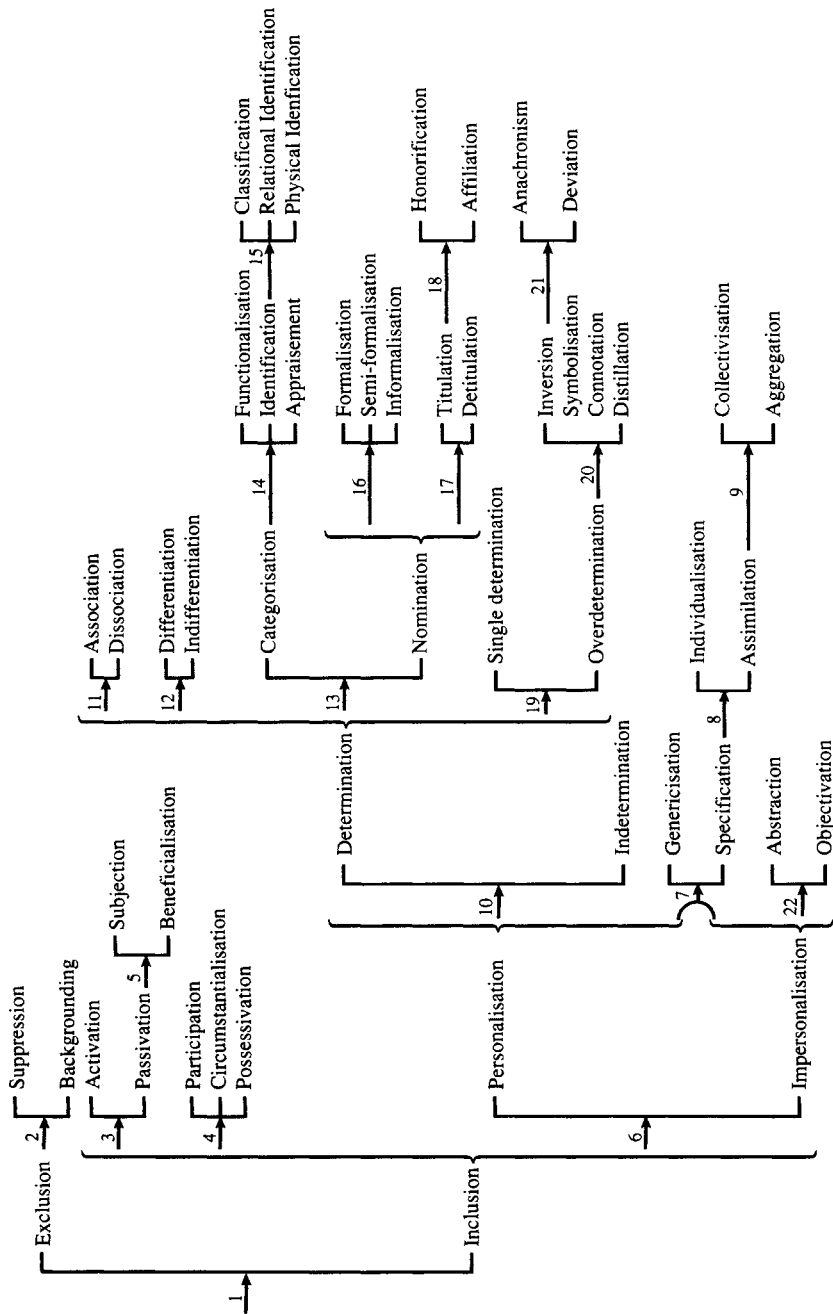


Figure 3.1 The representation of social actors in discourse: system network

‘activated’ or ‘passivated’), the curly brackets stand for simultaneous choices (e.g. social actors can be both ‘activated’ and ‘personalised’, or both ‘passivated’ and ‘personalised’ and so on). I hope that my discussion of the various categories in the network has made it clear that, in actual discursive practices, the choices need not always be rigidly ‘either/or’. Boundaries can be blurred deliberately, for the purpose of achieving specific representational effects, and social actors can be, for instance, both classified and functionalised. In such cases the categories remain nevertheless useful for making explicit how the social actors are represented.

The network brings together what linguists tend to keep separate: it involves a number of distinct lexicogrammatical and discourse-level linguistic systems, transitivity, reference, the nominal group, rhetorical figures, and so on, because all these systems are involved in the realisation of representations of social actors. Nevertheless, there is some linguistic consistency in the network. Initially, it involves three of the major types of transformation, deletion (systems 1 and 2), rearrangement (systems 3–5) and substitution (systems 6–22). Each type of transformation involves distinct linguistic systems: deletion involves voice, and also nominalisation and adjectivalisation, rearrangement principally involves transitivity, while substitution is initially realised by aspects of the structure of the nominal group—the Deictic and Postdeictic, that is, the system of reference (systems 7, 8, 10 and 12), and the Numerative (system 9) (Halliday, 1985, ch. 6; Matthiessen, 1992, ch. 3.2) and then by lexis, different classes of noun, including aspects of morphological structure (systems 13–18). Systems 19–22, finally, involve various forms of metaphor and metonym. More globally, the three sections, 7–12, 13–18 and 19–22, involve, respectively, reference, lexis (the field of nouns referring to human beings) and metaphor.

I shall, finally, summarise my discussion of the ‘Race Odyssey’ text, which, of course, has restricted itself to the representation of social actors, and therefore not dealt with many other salient and critically relevant features of this text.

Those who, in some way or other, are represented as being ‘concerned about’ or actually opposing immigration and immigrants in countries other than Australia, I have referred to as ‘racists’: in the article they are unfavourably compared to opponents of (‘high’) migration in Australia, who have ‘reasonable’ rather than ‘racist’ concerns about immigration. As we have seen, representation of these ‘racists’ is relatively often suppressed or backgrounded. This has to be offset against the fact that the exclusions follow very definite categorisations, such as ‘80 young white thugs’. It can be argued that the article invites us to interpret these vague or missing representations in the light of this initial categorisation, which has no equivalent in the representation of Australian opponents of immigration.

'Racists' are also often referred to generically, and they are individualised and nominated only when elite persons are concerned. On the other hand, they are frequently activated in relation to (passivated) immigrants, and this with respect to both material and verbal processes such as 'denying entry' and 'insulting' and mental processes such as 'being concerned'. When they are classified they are most frequently classified in much the same way as are immigrants, by 'where they are from', so that they have at least this in common with those other undesirables, the immigrants themselves. The only negative appraisal, finally, occurs in connection with this category of social actors, and it occurs the very first time they are referred to (again, the case of the '80 young white thugs').

Bruce Ruxton, the home-grown 'racist', is represented as equally undesirable. But, unlike 'racists' abroad, he is never backgrounded, and individualised as well as nominated. Like other 'racists', he is highly activated in relation to (passive) immigrants. In other words, at home one can easily single out the few deviant individuals who, unlike 'us', Australians, deserve the epithet 'racist', and then turn them into the notorious personifications of prejudice and bigotry which 'we' all (and especially the media) love to hate. Abroad, on the other hand, racism is much more pervasive.

Another group of social actors who oppose or worry about immigrants and immigration is formed by 'us', the Australian people 'as a whole'. This group is more sympathetically treated—less often backgrounded, less often referred to generically, and classified, if at all, only as 'Australians'. If they are activated, it is in relation to mental processes such as being 'bewildered' and 'not understanding', 'feeling unable to cope', and so on, rather than in relation to material and verbal processes, as in the case of the 'racists'. And finally, they form a collective, which underlines their supposed consensus about immigration issues.

The immigrants themselves I have referred to as 'them', and 'they' are relatively often backgrounded, and often referred to generically, which helps to distance the reader from them. They are either assimilated or aggregated, and the aggregations help to represent them as a large 'horde' about to invade 'us', and as the object of 'rational' calculation, rather than as fellow human beings. They are also represented abstractly, and this, again, frequently involves the abstraction of their number. More than any other category of social actors they are classified, by 'ethnic origin', class, race, level of education, wealth, and so on—differences which are not made in relation to 'us', Australians. And immigrants from different ethnic origins are sometimes lumped together in what I have called 'associations', to create further categories of migrant. If they are activated, finally, it is almost always in relation to one activity, that of 'immigrating': in every other respect they are acted *upon* by others.

The government is rarely backgrounded or referred to generically, and

often individualised and nominated, that is, personified in the person of the Prime Minister. It also transcends classification and is always functionalised and playing a highly active role in relation to the immigrants. The social actors who form the executive arm of the government, however, those who must actually 'stop' the immigrants, are suppressed: the article keeps the reality of 'cutting back immigration' at a comfortable distance from the reader.

'Experts' are represented in two ways. Either they are treated like elite persons (highly activated, functionalised, individualised, nominated and titled) or their utterances are autonomised and/or collectivised, to imbue them with impersonal authority and a sense of consensus among experts.

The writer of the article also refers to himself, and to his readers. The latter are addressed directly, the former makes 'the facts' speak in his stead ('They [i.e. these developments] highlight the fact that racism is seldom below the surface'). Whether or not the writer is also the social actor who legitimates the 'fears' of 'us', Australians, and 'entities' 'us' (and Prime Minister Hawke) to our feelings of pride, concern, etc., is not clear: although the legitimising social actor plays an important role in the process of immigration, reference to him or her is always suppressed. Perhaps we are not too far from the truth if we recognise here, through traces in the text itself, the active role of the media in this social process, despite the careful stance of neutrality suggested by the way in which most of the representation is attributed to sources other than the writer himself.

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