Interdiscursive Readings in Cultural Consumer Research

Interdiscursive Readings in Cultural Consumer Research

By

George Rossolatos

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE

INTER-EVERYTHING:
RESUMING THE DISCURSIVE TURN
IN CULTURAL CONSUMER RESEARCH

Introduction

The marketing theoretical landscape of the 21st C. is marked by unparalleled fragmentation, cross-disciplinary fermentation and the transpiring of culturally oriented consumer research as multiple interpretive avenues. Within this landscape, cultural phenomena are directly impacted by aspects of consumption (Featherstone, 2007), and vice versa, consumptive phenomena are approached as inextricably linked with integral aspects of cultural theorizing.

This book has been edified on the fundamental premise that consumptive reality is first and foremost situated in a cultural milieu and that this milieu is essentially interdiscursive. The cultural turn in consumer research that has been thriving over the past thirty years is a mere attestation to a suppressed presupposition by positivistically inclined, ego-centric research: cultural context lies at the heart of consumption related inquiry and may account for the similarities in individual consumption related response, immersion, evaluation patterns. Consumers are not hard-wired in their 'brains' to perceive of cultural reality in similar ways, but similarities in elicited perceptions resound more or less uniform habituses as aspects-of-seeing, perception and evaluation dispositions that are proportionate to common enculturation patterns. These quasi-deterministic habituses as structured structuring structures, in Bourdieu's words, are far from being identical to an objective Lifeworld that turned out to be Husserlian ego-centric phenomenology's thorniest point, as well as an insurmountable quandary in Schutz's social phenomenological turn that inherited Husserl's ego-centric vantage point (Rossolatos, 2017b). Ego-centric or psychologist perspectives have also spawned sci-fi metaphors such as the 'talking heads' hypothesis in lieu of scientific explanations. But, more

aptly, the former was smoothly superseded by Heideggerian social ontology that posited 'everyday practices' at the heart of inquiry into the question of Being, as a nexus of modes-of-Being whereby individuals (Da-seins or social actors who are 'there') comport themselves in relationship to their potentiality horizon. This nexus as a hyper-space of social practices was also evoked by Schatzki (2002) while taking the so-called praxiological turn that has garnered a sizeable trail of empirical applications.

In fact, if I were requested to identify the second dominant trend in cultural and by implication in cultural consumer research, this would bear the catch-all phrase 'inter-everything'. More concretely, I am referring to the Big Four perspectives of multimodality (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) or intermodality, also comprising the term intersemiosis (Liu & O'Halloran 2009), as well as the Barthesian antecedent of synaesthesia, interdiscursivity (Bhatia, 2010, 2014), transmediality (or intermediality; Jenkins, 2006; Kurtz et al., 2016; or remediation; Prior & Hengst, 2010) and intertextuality (Kristeva, 1980; Plett, 1991; Allen, 2000; van Zoonen, 2017).

In the following pages I turn backwards by 'bracketing' the praxiological turn, while treating its key tenets as fragments of a slowly transitioning kaleidoscopic movement, rather than as a rupture with preceding theories of cultural practices, such as those offered by Foucault and Bourdieu. The main objective is to offer an outline of interdiscursivity as an integrative platform that may accommodate the Big 4 under its auspices.

The propounded integrative approach to interdiscursivity calls for a return to Foucault. This return is historically situated in a terrain where praxiologists are increasingly challenging Foucault's discursivity in favor of a paradigmatic shift that views the sociocultural domain as a nexus of self-subsistent social practices where meaning has been reduced to a fuzzy 'element' of practices. However, as will be thoroughly argued in the ensuing sections, approaching cultural consumer phenomena, analyzing, interpreting them, but also, on the reverse, facilitating culturally informed marketing planning entails effectively dimensionalizing the cultural context that shelters consumption practices. In this respect, the trumpeted post-cultural turn that was taken with the encroachment of praxiology will be critically scrutinized. This task becomes even more compelling once we take into consideration the rising importance of the experiential economy, coupled with an enhanced emphasis on immersive cultural consumer experiences and engaging sociocultural practices (see chapter 2). Immersion and engagement perhaps constitute the mantra of contemporary marketing applications (on, off, through-the-line and across the hyperreal pathways of contemporary urban geographies). At the same time,

immersion and engagement, from a culturological point of view, are beset by increasing complexity as differentiating relevance becomes the overarching targeting criterion, rather than sedimented silos that cling onto constructs such as demographics, psychographics, and immutable personality traits. Consumers nowadays are more receptive and prone to adapt quickly to new competitive offers, leisure activities and malleable axiologies in the context of what Bauman (2007) identified as 'liquid modernity'. Liquid modernity in Bauman's sociological hermeneutics not only reflects a ubiquitous crisis of meaning, but also a permeating readiness to adapt and to shift perspectives in the face of a faster than ever before moving consumptive terrain. This is facilitated by enhanced consumer empowerment and by the elevation of co-creative instances to a background expectancy on behalf of marketers and consumers alike. The greater share of control about the meaning of consumption phenomena is allotted to the final consumer, the more the complexity of managing brand meaning in-house intensifies. Of course, the extent to which this cultural predicament may be accommodated under a descriptor that conveys vestiges of modernity, rather than (still) being symptomatic of a postmodern ethos that allegedly displays a penchant for the ephemeral, but also whether pre-modernist consumer tribal formations co-exist with both modernist and post-modernist ethotic patterns, constitute broader topics that are regularly addressed in the extant literature.

Again, this enhanced complexity of the meaning of consumptive phenomena may be invoked as a suitable occasion for rendering the call for a comprehensive account of the upsurge and incessantly mounting importance of interdiscursivity's derivatives even more compelling. Why all this fuss, buzz and interminable inquisition of aspects that have been indubitably impacting all along (while remaining unaddressed) decision making, purchasing and consuming, and above all, why now?

As I hope you will come to appreciate as the argumentation unfolds, in order to effectively leverage the Big 4 we must first gain an understanding of interdiscursivity, and how it may function as an integrative framework wherein these derivatives may be accommodated, if not strictly hierarchically, at least as modes-of-interdiscursivity (*pace* Heidegger [2001], albeit desublimated from any appeals to a univocal ground of Being). In order to get 'there', that is on the way to effecting a synthesis of 'inter-' derivatives under the rubric of interdiscursivity, the following path has been carved: The scope of cultural consumer research as field of inquiry is delimited at the outset of the argumentative journey in order to nurture a common expectancy as to what phenomena and sociocultural practices are included in this allegedly polysemous term. This outline is

succeeded by a preliminary discussion of what is posited here as the inherent interdiscursivity of consumer culture. In order to appreciate the thesis for an all-encompassing interdiscursivity (with regard to the Big 4) and why it is posited as a fundamental condition of consumer culture, Foucault's original theory of discursive formations is laid out, complemented by a short description of the four methodological routes of discursive inquiry that derive from different evolutionary stages in Foucault's thinking. Subsequently, the ways whereby Foucauldian discursivity has been appropriated by key authors in the discourse analytic stream are discussed, aiming at identifying potential discrepancies and dissonances, both with regard to Foucault, as well as intra-perspectively. The discussion's focus then turns towards the praxiological perspective with which I engage critically in favor of interdiscursivity. Finally, the proposed conceptualization of interdiscursivity is laid out and its benefits discussed for cultural consumer research and marketing practice alike.

Delimiting cultural consumer research

Since there is hardly any agreement on the meaning of consumption, let alone culture, delimiting the definitional scope of these terms is a prerequisite. In this book, I adopt a pan-consumptivist standpoint, meaning that any social act involving one or more products, services, spectacles, ideologies, experiences, practices may be said to constitute a consumptive act. "Raymond Williams (1976, 68) points out [that] one of the earliest uses of the term consume meant 'to destroy, to use up, to waste, to exhaust'" (in Featherstone, 2007, p.21). This definition is further elaborated in chapter 5 that explores acts of modern-day cannibalism.

In the meantime, let us elucidate how this etymological detour may be of use in culturally inclined consumer research. As analyzed by Williams (1983) one of the most primordial meanings of culture consists in cultivation, namely of brute emotions and crude thoughts. As a process, culture consists of what Elias called civilizing processes whereby instincts and emotions are articulated into determinate forms. Cultural forms consist of popular arts such as music, cinema, theater, literature which have come to dominate the meaning of culture in lay terms. Nowadays, culture has become synonymous with a culture industry (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972) that offers artefacts (e.g. DVDs) that package art forms (e.g. cinema) in distinctive modes (e.g. audiovisual), distributed through various media (e.g. online shops), as well as directly consumable spectacles (e.g. live-shows) and experiences (e.g. engagement in an online

cultural community) that are consumed either in situ or virtually (e.g. on youtube).

Culture has become intimately imbricated with consumption in a post-post-modernist milieu where consumer identity is mediated by and inscribed in the artefacts, experiences, spectacles, practices offered and enabled by a culture industry consisting of interlocking networks of mediators of cultural production. "Consumption serves as an organizing practice of and in culture. Interrogating the nature and forms of consumption is thus inseparable from cultural analysis" (Cook, 2005, p.162). The meaning of cultural practices that is adopted here encompasses both the production and consumption sides of culture, any co-creative facets in-between, but also instances where end-consumers operate as cultural intermediaries (e.g. during a Tupperware demonstration- the case of cooking with Bimby [Truninger, 2011] or as an Avon peer-to-peer seller or as a cultural ambassador for an alcoholic drink brand).

Needless to say, but for the sake of dispelling any suspicion about the contrary, no distinction is endorsed here between a presumed high-brow culture and a low-brow one or between the concept of civilization as conveyor of 'humanity's great ideals' and popular culture, as an ephemeral hub of inauthentic expressivity. It should be clarified, however, that this reflects a culturological posture and not the ubiquitous leveraging of cultural idioms, trends and forms by social groups as rules-of-etiquette and marks of distinction, as eloquently shown by Bourdieu (1984). Contemporary forms such as prosumerism (Kotler, 1986), that is end-consumers whose mastery of means of cultural production is almost as professional as that of the employees of the production side of the culture industry, facilitated by the ubiquitous availability of audiovisual data editing tools (e.g. Vimeo video-making, Instagram photo editing tools), have partially blurred the aforementioned time-hallowed divide. It should also be highlighted that I endorse the thesis for the relative autonomy of culture, especially as concerns the non-identification of culture with national cultures, as well as the appropriation of cultural logics by political ideologies and regimes (Rorty, 2007). The latter impacts directly on the way I am approaching here Foucault's discourse theory, that is strictly from a cultural analytic point of view and specifically with an intent on applying it in cultural consumer research, regardless of whether, according to Rorty, Foucault has been identified with the New American Left (Malecki, 2011). By the same token, although Lyotard was indubitably supported and perhaps thrived within a left-oriented political environment, his *Postmodern Condition* fuelled the imaginary of generations of media owners and producers who may hardly be identified with any leftist

inclinations. The ways whereby philosophers' and other social scientists' intellectual output have been and most likely will continue to be appropriated by political ideologies are well known and include seminal figures such as Hegel and Heidegger, often with disregard to the truth of the matter.

As regards disciplinary frameworks, consumer culture has been approached conceptually and methodologically through multiple perspectival lenses, most importantly via cultural studies, cultural sociology, cultural anthropology, discourse analysis, semiotics, rhetoric, psychoanalysis, but also from within the marketing discipline in the context of what has become more or less entrenched as cultural consumer theory (CCT; Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Levy, 2015). Despite appearances, these disciplinary frameworks do not follow parallel paths in their developmental trajectories, but are characterized by resourceful cross-fertilizations. This polyvocal fermentation is reflected in the bespoke research designs that are adopted in the studies that appear in the chapters of this book.

In social ontological terms, an act of consumption points to the consummation of its goal or its annihilation. This is akin to the metaphorical investment of orgasm in French as 'small death' (*petit mort*) that has been an all-time favorite in psychoanalytic theorizing. The 'petit'-ness [sic] of such annihilation acts also lets shine forth, by comparison, a lurking 'greatness' that is attributable to death as such. It is the insatiability of consumptive desire as death-bound process of constant rekindling (Belk, 2004) in a libidinal semiotic economy that allows for tingeing these *small* acts with the dazzling whiteness of a moratorium's internal decoration. Death is employed here in an ontological sense as one's ownmost potentiality-for-Being (cf. chapter 7), rather than as a biological phenomenon. This 'great' exchangeability system also enables us to appreciate why Baudrillard identified death as the whatness lurking beneath every act of symbolic exchange, as the indeterminacy conditioning all products and determinate consumptive acts (Baudrillard, 2002). In other words, for as long as one is, he is bound to consume (even where no monetary exchange is involved). This definitional facet also sensitizes us to aspects of consumption that are systematically obliterated in myopic accounts that assume a more intuitive approach in the exploration of consumption as purchase and/or use.

From a more mundanely expansive, ontical point of view, consumption may be viewed as a spectrum of acts spanning purchase, use, exchange, maintenance, repair, and disposal (Campbell, 2005), involving not just products and services, but also spectacles, experiences, practices, ideologies,

in short anything that constitutes the outcome of cultural production and can become the 'object' for the aforementioned actions. This expansive definition constitutes a mainstay in contemporary cultural consumer research, as well as among sociologically inclined researchers who adopt an equally pan-consumptivist outlook (e.g. Campbell, 2005). This definitional avenue also suggests that cultural consumption is not equivalent to market-place consumption. Yet, cultural consumption at large is directly relevant and exerts a major impact on market-place consumption. For example, the consumption of an ideology or a belief system (as will be shown in greater detail in chapter 6) poses intangible, yet tactile (as regards its pragmatic effects) constraints on the permissible scope of consumable products and services. From a cultural consumption research point of view, this is self-explanatory insofar as culture concerns fundamentally the ascription of meaning to amorphous matter and/or indiscriminate states-of-affairs. To enculturate an object, a person or a state-of-affairs entails some sort of discursive domestication according to a belief system or its moulding according to a set of more or less stable ideas, beliefs, judgments. Culture is all about meaning and how different contexts afford to reassign meaning to the same objects (although this hermeneutically inclined presumption of 'sameness' is ontologically contestable as will be discussed in a while).

In a nutshell, cultural context not only influences how consumptive acts are interpreted or semanticized in a sociocultural milieu involving situated social actors who share the same linguistic (among other modes) means for expressing meaning (also including the possibility of private languages in markets of one- or brand idiolects at their most undercoded), but is responsible for enveloping social situations within a nexus of inter-locking sociocultural practices. "Consumer culture, then, does not refer to constellations of meaning emerging exclusively from the retail sector or which are evident only at the point of transaction. It is not only about those meanings produced by the producers of goods or by advertisers; yet, it cannot be disentangled from them" (Cook, 2005, p.162).

Elaborating further on the meaning of consumer culture and consumption as culture we may identify the following territories: (i) culture as consumable 'objects', that is as artefacts, spectacles, leisure activities, art, places; (ii) culture as consumable 'ideas', that is as symbols, semi-symbols, imaginary signifiers and transcendental signifieds (e.g. consuming a political ideology or a religious belief system); (iii) consumption as cultural 'structures and processes', involving modes of organization (e.g. brand communities), interaction and communicative codes among social actors (e.g. in new social movements, in gift-giving

occasions, in ritualized activities such as a loyal fandom's bonding rituals; cf. Collins, 2004; Otnes & Lowrey, 2004; Giesler, 2006). Sociocultural practices and experiences may involve one or all of the above territories which are elaborated through illustrative empirical studies in this book.

Consumer culture as interdiscursive phenomenon

A key tenet of the propounded interdiscursivity perspective is that consumer culture may not be studied outside of a discursive framework as 'brute facts' or as extra-discursive referents. "Discourse does not reflect extrinsic conditions, but rather produces them: discourse relates elements, concepts, and makes it possible for certain non-discursive elements to constitute themselves as objects" (Rojo & Pujol, 2011, p.90). These heterogeneous elements coalesce under determinate constellations as discursive formations, a fundamental epistemological concept that was coined by Foucault and of central value in his archeological system. "Discursive formations are groups of statements [my note: among other minimal units inscribed in multiple modes and circulating in various media] linked at the level of statements themselves, and by virtue of these links it becomes possible to define rules for the formation of their objects, their modes of enunciation and subject positions, their associated domains, forms of succession and simultaneity, the way they are institutionalised, used and combined together, and finally the way that they become instruments for desire or interest, and elements for a strategy" (Webb, 2013, p.104). "The correlate of the statement is a group of domains in which objects may appear and to which relations may be assigned" (Foucault, 2004, p.102). Discursive formations, thus, constitute amalgamations or clustered assemblages that do not partake of a strict structuralist rationale of units and levels. For example, a discursive formation may feature relationships between discursive orders at a high level of schematic abstraction (e.g. sports and cooking) or between one discursive order (e.g. sports) and two discursive types (e.g. football and cricket). The incidence of a TV show that features footage from a football game and a cooking lesson on how to prepare a Christmas turkey establishes an interdiscursive relationship between two discursive orders (sports and cooking), as a syntagmatic arrangement in the course of the same TV show which also affords to compound the interdiscursive cluster as a discursive type that partakes of the discursive order of entertainment.

The relative stability (and hence recognizability on behalf of consumers) of discursive orders, types and interdiscursive relationships is incumbent on cultural groups' (operative in a cultural field) relative power

in determining their formations as dominant over sub-altern ones. The meaning of the respective orders and types does not inhere in the cultural practices, but in the discursive formations that are performed and promulgated by cultural groups involving networks of mediators of cultural production. A cultural system consists by definition of interdiscursive relationships between high-abstraction orders and more determinate types at its apex, themselves presided by meta-discursive formations that permeate the majority of cultural orders, such as the myth of subjectivity as substratum of experiences, the grammatical system of a natural language, the co-operation maxim and the politeness principle (or equivalent cultural forms as civilizing processes and structures). The pan-consumptivist outlook to culture inherits this fundamental presupposition concerning the inherently interdiscursive composition of a cultural system.

Interdiscursivity has been multifariously defined and operationalized in discrete disciplinary settings, such as literary studies and CDA (cf. Wu, 2011). Interdiscursivity is not a dimension of discourse, but the very foundation for making sense of consumer culture as a web of interlocking discursive formations. This standpoint implies that the incidence of 'inter-' is indicative of some sort of generative force that animates and permeates a cultural system. Indeed, if not validly arguable in such mythopoetic terms, it will be shown that the vantage point for construing accounts of cultural consumer phenomena is coeval with illustrating how interdiscursivity may constitute an integrative framework for drilling down from abstract cultural orders to more fine-grained analyses along the lines of intertextuality, multi(inter)modality and trans(inter)mediality. The relational logic of interdiscursivity as constitutive of the sociocultural has been endorsed by discourse analysts. Fairclough (2003, p.26), for example, views social practices as always networked and shifting. Fairclough & Chouliaraki (1999), but also praxiologists, approach social practices as always already embedded in a nexus, as will be shown in a more elaborate fashion in due course. "Applying a relational logic to a social practice means showing how it is embedded in networks of practices whose relative stabilization underpins the relative stability and permanence of the practice itself as a set of options for selection and combination" (Fairclough & Chouliaraki, 1999, p.32).

The Foucauldian origins of discourse

Providing a uniform definition of discourse spanning the different phases of Foucault's thinking is untenable for the sheer reason that the term has been employed in multifarious ways, not only by Foucault, but

also by discourse analysis scholars (cf. Wodak, 2008). Discourse as an omnibus term affords greater confusion than clarity, precisely due to its over-generic and all-encompassing pedigree. On the one hand, as repeatedly cautioned in the secondary literature (e.g. Bruns, 2005), discourse should by no means be conceived as being identical to language or speech. In fact, occasionally and across disciplines discourse has been employed in the Saussurean sense as being equivalent to oral speech (*parole*), in contradistinction to text which has been used as a proxy for written speech. The former is considerably underdetermining with regard to Foucault's (2004) employment whose conceptualization in the *Archeology of Knowledge* encompassed objects, events, institutions, practices. The latter has been cogently expanded to include any cultural phenomenon that may be described as a text, including social practices as social texts that we always read from the inside and which encompass us, as pithily put by Lefebvre (2002). "'Text' can mean any form of signification: writings, photographs, movies, newspapers and magazines, advertisements and commercials; all in all, every kind of human signification practice" (Lehtonen, 2000, p.57). Nowadays, the restricted notion of text circulates far less broadly as common currency, although its differences from discourse remain to be elucidated, as will be undertaken in due course.

There is good reason why Foucault accommodated such a diverse roster of sociocultural phenomena under the same umbrella, namely that discourse functions primarily on an ontogenetic/ontological level. In the same manner that for Derrida nothing exists outside of the text, for Foucault nothing may be credited with existence outside of discursive formations (cf. Boyne, 1990). Discourse, for Foucault, is an active occurring/event (Hook, 2001). A crucial difference between text and discourse, in this respect, consists in the latter's comprising the rituals whereby orders of discourse are maintained, e.g. rituals of punishment in disciplinary discourse (Foucault, 1979). Although a text may feature instructions as to how forms of punishment are to be enacted, it does not include the actual practice of punishment.

For Foucault, discourse is ontogenetically related not simply to the textual inscription of practices, but to their very formation as such. This is far from naïve nominalism, an antiquated descriptor that has been ascribed to Foucauldian discursivity in lieu of a critique, save for a quite intuitive conceptualization suggesting that although the multimodal signs making up a disciplinary practice indubitably possess materiality and a corporeal dimension, yet their meaning resides in the discursive order which arranges their deployment and their modes of relatedness in a specific

manner. Thus, the discursive order of punishment does not 'refer' to signs of punishment, but the signs are assigned to the discursive order by dint of being included within its contours. This is why *Archeology* as method (and its evolution later into the genealogical method) does not suggest that the truth of a discourse may be progressively excavated hermeneutically as a semantic kernel that is more or less proximally situated with regard to multiple readings, but that each archeological reading in fact spawns a new discursive formation. This constitutes Foucault's irreducible perspectivism, as bequeathed from Nietzsche, according to which "discourse analysis cannot be taken to reveal a 'truth' within the text" (Hook, 2001, p.539).

The same may be said of social practices, depending on the frame of reference that is posited for gauging the order of which they partake. Running ahead of the argumentation, but for the sake of glimpsing into the radical counter-implications of Foucault's thesis for the 'practice turn', let us consider the example of a TV show. For the spectators, watching a TV show is part of leisure activities and, hence, a discursive type of the discursive order of entertainment. However, for the show's employees it is just business as usual and, hence, a discursive type of the discursive order of work. Therefore, it becomes apparent that the signs making up a TV show do not make up by themselves the show as such. It is the imposition of order on the concatenation of signs that allows them to exist as an identifiable totality (even if only provisionally so, that is until a new archeological endeavor brings to the surface or interweaves more and perhaps different signs with the existing ones in the same order, thus expanding or constraining its boundaries or redefining it altogether). Subsequently, a discourse is productive of a social practice, and not just a series of statements. In this respect, Foucault's discourse theory partakes of the broader perspective of social constructivism.

The ambivalence, however, of discursive orders with regard to their semantic or praxiological scope that was noted earlier and more specifically the occasional conflation of discourse with parole is not fully attributable to scholarly readings, but to Foucault's own demonstration and application of his discursivity theory in the *Archeology* by recourse to 'statements'. This bifurcation has been bequeathed to Fairclough's discourse analytic strand, as well as Scollon's (2001) mediated discourse analysis. Although Fairclough (1992) in his introductory outline of discourse analysis does include texts and institutions, later (Fairclough, 2003) he provides a statement-oriented definition of discourse. In a similar fashion, Scollon (2001, p.5) contends that "practices are linked to other practices, discursive and non-discursive, over time to form a nexus of practice", and even more explicitly "it seems that language – discursive

practice – enters the habitus as a meditational means…" (Scollon, 2001, p.137), thus confining discursivity within the province of utterances. Foucault (2004) did draw on the 'statement' as the minimal unit of discourse and identified a discursive formation with the regularity of statements' dispersal in a scrutinized corpus (archive). However, his insistence on the linguistic register (as against other modes) is not indicative of a latent intentionality at constraining discursivity within the confines of the linguistic, and demonstrably so since he explicitly refers to institutions and social practices in the *Archeology*.

A discourse formation includes the actual practices whereby knowledge is produced and the institutions that facilitate or hinder this production across domains and is not simply the province of linguistic analysis, but also of rules and strategies. This involves strategies of negotiation among situated social actors and the power play that deploys in interactional settings, as well as broader institutional forms that pose constraints on the output of interactive micro-processes (which have been posited at the very kernel of the production of the social by Collins [2004] in his microsociological perspective of social interaction chains). Scollon seeks to anchor the priority of social practices (as extra-discursive referents) over discourse by drawing partially on a specific phase of practice formation, that of emergence, as against crystallized, over-coded and largely repetitive practices. However, this partial focus on the degree of typification of a discursive formation says little about dominant discourses that are prescriptive and whose identity depends on immutable repetition (or with slight variations) across settings.

Discourse formation, thus, is a practical concept that concerns both macro, as well as the meso-level and micro-social processes. Its pragmatic correlate, as conversation analysis, is capable of unearthing latent assumptions and relationships among interlocutors in situated discourse production, however this undertaking is not symmetrical to the scope of discourse formation as originally envisaged by Foucault. This all-encompassing orientation of discursivity in its original Foucauldian conceptualization has been bequeathed to Fairclough's discourse analytic approach, albeit with some deviations from fundamental tenets which will be pointed out in the following sections. As regards micro-processes, a discourse involves the textual and other cultural artefacts (that may be analysed textually in any case, e.g. films, paintings, memes etc.) that make up a discursive domain, inasmuch as what texts and why have been excluded from that domain. Inquiry into the former is part of Foucault's archeological method of knowledge production. Inquiry into the latter is part of the genealogical method. Additionally, since knowledge production

usually takes place within groups, mapping out the process whereby agreement is reached on what constitutes a valid text within a discourse domain is key. Again, this involves marshalling both archeological and genealogical methods. As regards macro-processes, focal points concern the institutional forms that constrain the delimitation of specific discourses, as well as enable their formation (but also potentially their resemantization and reappropriation, e.g. of a cultural text by a dominant state ideology). In short, discourse formation does not concern merely the grammatical aspects whereby a discourse is produced as a set of statements or utterances, but the entire chain of practical considerations that begin with the situated interaction of social actors up to the constraints posed by institutional mechanisms.

The argumentation that deploys in the *Archeology* against the background of 'statements' as minimal analytical units is symptomatic of Foucault's expressed aim at effecting a post-semiotic turn with his theory of discursivity. The extent to which this task was actually nailed by Foucault with the *Archeology* is highly debatable, especially in the light of the post-Saussurean strides that had been accomplished by the then newly founded semiotic discipline, most importantly on behalf of Foucault's contemporaries, and especially the Greimasian school. Although tackling this issue at great length by far eschews the purview of this chapter, suffice to point out that a key semiotic principle from which Foucault actively sought to deviate was that of a linguistic system (Saussure's *langue*). "The statement is not therefore a structure […] it is a function of existence; although it enables them to exist, it does so in a special way — a way that must not be confused with the existence of signs as elements of a *langue*" (Foucault, 2004, pp.97-99; my italics)." Of course, assuming Saussurean semiology at the time the *Archeology* was composed as the master-text for effecting a 'turn' did not quite pay heed to the actual advances accomplished by semioticians who had already severed the ties with fundamental Saussurean principles. This is further compounded by Foucault's anti-scholarly posture, evinced as a scarce engagement with specific passages from Saussure's (1959) *Cours*.

All in all, Foucault's central thesis was incumbent on abjuring the possibility of an a priori systemic conceptualization of language, in the vein of Saussure's *langue*, as a latent synchronically arranged linguistic system which was bequeathed (albeit not in such a holistic fashion) to the Barthesian (1968) notion of sign-system(s). At the same time, Foucault's discursivity differs markedly from Barthesian semiotics and its Saussurean heritage while focusing on higher order rules of discursive formation, rather than relata among signs. Foucault's (2004, p.54) discourse analytic

approach "consists of not — of no longer — treating discourses as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things."

Discursive practices do not *represent* social practices, but construe them as arrangements of multimodal elements in more or less orderly manners. A social practice is indistinguishable from the discursive formation that encapsulates it. For Foucault, discursive formations do not represent social affairs and situations that condition them ontologically, but are responsible for their presencing as such. This standpoint runs counter to van Leeuwen's (2008) assertion that discourse represents social practices. Alternative discursive formations constitute new forms of presencing which lays claim to the inherently ontogenetic and semiogenetic function performed by Foucault's theory of discursivity.

The notion of order of discourse (Foucault, 1973) effected a radical break with the possibility of approaching language as ideational totality of statements. Instead, a discursive formation as enunciative field constrains temporarily the statements that are included under its auspices, on the grounds of the possibility of even a completely different re-ordering that might afford to confer a wholly new meaning in the context of another formation. As remarked by Maniglier (2013, p.108) "the very notion of Order as immanent implies that […] the whole network is folded onto itself and represented within itself. In other words, an ordered system of things represents itself by generating within itself an ordered system of representations." This passage affords to frame the aforementioned break with (early) structualist semiology quite succinctly, namely that language does not underpin parole as ideational totality, but that such a systemic representation is feasible as the effect of discourse's internal mirroring. As will be argued later, this is a critical aspect of interdiscursivity that eschewed the rather 'sudden' praxiological turn.

Foucault's discourse theory, though, not only entails an infinite immanentist drift (rather than epistemological shift) as regards the constitution of objects and states-of-affairs, but marks a radical break with the Cartesian ego-centric heritage that still underpins psychologically and behaviorally inclined consumer research. A discursive formation is not a linguistic construal effected by a knowing subject in its attempt to articulate stimuli received from the external environment (or from a domain 'within'), but subjectivity as such is a discursive formation as the positing of an ideational substratum beneath what is portrayed discursively as a synthetic act. The subject is constituted as such through the processes

of subjection and subjectivation. "Subjection means that an individual or collective is proclaimed subject within a specific discourse […] subjectivation when the individual or collective has not only been made the subject but also *wishes* to be so" (Andersen, 2003, p.24; italics in the original). This constructivist outlook to subject formation as discursive formation that has been bequeathed to both performativity theory and discourse analysis rests, largely, on two levels: the empirical self or the 'me' (the self who conducts synthetic acts of stimuli) and the transcendental self or the 'I' (the self to whom memories and experiences may be attributed as omnipresent throughout ad hoc synthetic instances). This *grosso modo* transcendental idealist definition of selfhood (or consciousness, more aptly) has been elaborated and redefined in many ways throughout the history of philosophy, as well as in various strands of psychology. What is of paramount importance, though, with regard to Foucault's approach, is that neither the empirical nor the transcendental subject subsist and underpin experiences as 'entities', but as the progeny of an order of discourse, the subjection to which allows for the establishment of consumers as processing monads. Texts that reify selfhood are regularly tagged in discourse analysis as essentializing or naturalized discourse. Recently, from a praxiological point of view, subjectivation was defined "as a process inherently embedded in praxis, in which the ability intelligently to orient one's action towards practice-specific requirements is continually being formed and in which the process of doing can also entail the critique and transcendence of these requirements" (Alkemeyer & Buschmann, 2017). The implications of this standpoint are pivotal for cultural consumer research as it affords to dislodge the subject as data-processing centre (the AI metaphor) while embedding it in constitutive terms in a broader cultural terrain that conditions it both discursively (as regards specific orders of discourse, e.g. cultural institutions and cultural products), as well as meta-discursively, that is as subject *simpliciter*.

The methodological toolbox of Foucauldian discourse theory

As shown earlier, for Foucault discourse is first and foremost ontogenetic with regard to the sociocultural domain and its sub-domains. It is a generative principle for knowing and engaging with sociocultural practices as discursive practices. Four principal methods of inquiry pertaining to discursivity have been identified throughout Foucault's

oeuvre, namely archeological discourse analysis, genealogy, technologies of self, and dispositif analysis (Andersen, 2003).

Archeologically tracing the emergence of a discursive formation involves three main operations (Foucault, 2004, pp.45-46): mapping the surface of emergence, describing the authorities of delimitation and analysing the grids of specification. In greater detail, mapping the surface of emergence comprises the modes of rationalization, the conceptual codes, and the types of theory whereby certain phenomena are objectified as such. Describing the authorities of delimitation entails focusing on institutions and their own rules, on groups of individuals constituting a profession, and on authorities recognized by public opinion, the law, and government. Analysing the grids of specification concerns the systems according to which phenomena are divided, contrasted, related, regrouped, classified, derived from one another as objects of discourse.

The archeological and genealogical methods are probably the most well-known ones to cultural consumer researchers who have been engaged with diachronic analyses of corpora, perhaps of less critical orientation. Although partially overlapping, the qualifying difference lies in that the former adopts a descriptive outlook towards a historical inventory (archive, corpus) that has been recognized as relevant to a discursive practice, whereas the latter seeks to unearth hidden and excluded voices that were suppressed in the process of consolidating a discourse type. "Moving beyond the archaeologist's reconstruction of the conditions of knowledge, appearance, and articulation of a particular historical formation, the genealogist restages the hazardous play of dominations through which a regime of power stabilizes itself" (Crano, 2011, p. 162).

Also pertinent for the purposes of an interdiscursive approach is the dispositif analysis that seeks to create links between the elements of a discursive apparatus (either in a synchronic or diachronic fashion). "The apparatus is the 'heterogeneous ensemble': it is a system of elements between which there exists a functional connection. The strategic imperative or logic is a generalized schematic that brings about a particular logic" (Andersen, 2003, p.27; also see Bussolini 2010; Thompson, 2017). In fact, were it not for dispositif analysis, the axiomaticity of a power structure (its symbolic violence, in Bourdieu's [1977] terms) that lumps together a discursive apparatus as a seemingly coherent ensemble would be inscrutable.

Insofar as the logic of a discursive apparatus is evinced as a generalized schematic, it may hardly be said to be 'rational'. Its rationale is that of instrumental reason, albeit an instrumentality that does not simply abide by pragmatic exigencies as might be postulated by a praxiological perspective, but by the distribution of social roles in

discursive practices according to specific patterns of subjectivization. For example, the statement 'I feel quite energized today' may be appropriated quite differently by the discursive orders of work and leisure. In the context of work, it may be concatenated with actions that culminate in an over-productive working day. In the context of leisure, it may amount to spending a day in the gym. Each order envelops the statement in completely different ways, thus culminating in utterly discrepant social actions as a result of different ways of subjectivization.

Chances are that experiencing such a mood-state of elevated vigor will not translate automatically into a propensity for engaging meta-discursively in a genealogical tracing of the options for satisfying it as a result of subjectivization processes. This secondary self-reflexivity level that seems to be lacking from the 'practice turn' marks an entire territory for critical marketing studies pertaining to the cultural consumer research prong that was identified earlier with the consumption of culture as structures and processes, in the sense of unpacking a subject's meta-discursive habitual constraints. Similar constraints are noted in chapter 2 with regard to the fields of multimodal literacy and naturalistic ethnographic inquiry.

The discourse analytic appropriations of Foucauldian discursivity

The popularization of discourse analysis as a method of textual inquiry for meaningful patterns across disciplines is rooted in Foucauldian discourse analysis. Here, an exposition of main areas where dominant discourse analytic strands deviate from Foucauldianism is undertaken, with a view to demonstrating later why and how the propounded interdiscursivity approach is streamlined with the call for a return to Foucault.

Although the purveyors of what became entrenched as critical discourse analysis (e.g. Fairclough, 1992; van Leeuwen, 2007; Wodak, 2008), also including Halliday's (1978) social semiotic perspective that is regularly credited as one of the dominant discourse analytic strands (cf. Rahimi & Javad Riasati, 2011), unanimously acknowledge the influence exerted by Foucault's theory of discursivity, it may hardly be entertained that this was espoused to the letter. Rather, we are concerned with a piecemeal appropriation during which some fundamental Foucauldian tenets were either abandoned or transgressed.

Fairclough & Choulariaki (1999) who display a penchant for Marxist structuralism (macro-level of social theorizing), retain in their tripartite

division of discourse the classical sociological distinction amongst levels of social structures (micro-, meso-, macro-). According to Fairclough (2003), macro-structures are highly abstract social structures (e.g. language, class, kinship). Meso-structures bridge macro-structures with micro-structures and consist of social practices (e.g. teaching, management) and genres (e.g. of texts encountered at the micro-level). Finally, micro-structures consist of events as instantiations of social practices, both as regards situated social interaction and textual inscriptions of social practices. This schema deviates from Foucauldian discursivity while endorsing the relatively deterministic force exerted by macro-structures on individual social actors by subscribing to the internalization hypothesis. Quasi-agentic capacity is also ascribed to social actors as extra-discursively constituted monads, thus deviating from the subjectivization principle that is endemic in Foucault's discourse theory. Furthermore, at the meso-level, whereas Foucault explicitly views social practices as being indistinguishable from discursive practices and in fact as the former being construed through the latter, Fairclough (2003) retains an ontological distinction between social and discursive practices which he seeks to conjoin through the stratagem of co-constitution. Apparently in an attempt to avoid criticisms about being either a nominalist or a realist, Fairclough refrains from ascribing primacy to either of these ontologically indistinct dimensions, while approaching them as being co-terminous: "the apparently paradoxical fact that although the discourse element of a social practice is not the same as for example its social relations, each in a sense contains or internalizes the other" (Fairclough, 2003, p.25). Scollon (2001, p.11) follows a similar route while viewing practices as containing a discursive element "which is not just or merely a reflection upon practice but to some extent constitutive of that practice", although the extent of discourse's constitutive effect is not qualified. "Mediated discourse sees social practice and discursive practice as mutually constitutive" (Scollon, 2001, p.160). Nevertheless, Foucault does not appear to be credited for having been the first to raise this argument: "when Foucault maintains that the description of a practice provides the key to the intelligibility of subject and object, he implies that both are nothing other than its correlate, and they are ontologically simultaneous and coextensive" (Djaballah, 2008, p.221).

In the light of Foucault's interdiscursivity thesis, Fairclough (2003) contends that social practices are always networked and that genres are always ordered in genre chains. At this juncture, Fairclough adopts both a narrow and an expansive definition of interdiscursivity. The former is evinced as genre chains whereas the latter features orders of discourse,

styles, social actions (Fairclough, 2003, p.38). Interdiscursivity was rehashed by Fairclough, by drawing on Harvey's (1980) postmodernist hybridity theory, and Bakhtin's dialogical principle, according to which texts are inherently dialogical.

Intertextuality occasionally appears to be employed interchangeably with interdiscursivity in discourse analytic accounts, although their operational level should be quite clear (at least as per Fairclough's stratification). For example, Wodak (2008, p.3; italics in the original; also see Reisigl & Wodak, 2009) offers an almost tautological definition: "*Intertextuality* refers to the fact that all texts are linked to other texts, both in the past and in the present […] *Interdiscursivity*, on the other hand, indicates that discourses are linked to each other in various ways", despite distinguishing them more pithily later in the same text in terms of discourse's operating at a more abstract level compared to text whereas text is a unique and specific realization of discourse. "Interdiscursivity is more complicated because it is concerned with the implicit relations between discursive formations rather than the explicit relations between texts" (Wu, 2011, p.97).

Wodak (2008) appears to be deviating from Foucault's original conceptualization of discourse as discursive practice whereby social practices come to be known as discursive formations, yet not being reducible to the linguistic order, precisely by ascribing to it an overarching functional pragmatic role as structured sets of speech acts. In my view, the precarious distinction between discourse and text might have been eschewed by acknowledging that text is still discourse, yet functioning at another level compared to discourse as discursive order, that is at the level of a more or less structured output (Candlin & Maley, 2014, p.202) rather than as the process-oriented definition of discursive order (e.g. the difference between finished film as text and cinematography as discursive order).

The notion of interdiscursivity has become quite entrenched in accounts of professional discourse. The same definitional problematic between text and discourse, intertextuality and interdiscursivity recurs in this instance. On a par with Wodak's (2008) aforementioned distinction, Bhatia (2010) positions interdiscursivity at a superior (more abstract) level compared to intertextuality, albeit failing to define it more concretely at the identified abstraction level, save for ascribing a general descriptor that somehow, fuzzily that is, concerns 'cultural context'.

The usefulness of the term consists in adding emphasis to contextual aspects of intertextuality, yet this aspect is not further qualified in operationally pertinent terms. Additionally, it is applied to intertextuality

on a genre level, as contextual aspects of inter-genre interactions, without
taking cognizance of the superior ontogenetic role performed by discourse
and hence of interdiscursivity as noted earlier. "Interdiscursivity can be
viewed as appropriation of semiotic resources […] across any two or more
of these different levels, especially those of genre, professional practice
and professional culture. Appropriations across texts thus give rise to
intertextual relations, whereas appropriations across professional genres,
practices, and cultures constitute interdiscursive relations" (Bhatia, 2010,
p.35; Bhatia, 2014). Discursivity, here, is progressively identified by
Bhatia with cultural practices, rather than texts, whereas initially the
distinction appears to be concerning levels of innovation between cross-
genre fertilizations. This shift in argumentative focal points between the
beginning and the end of the syllogism imbues the distinction with greater
fuzziness than it might have afforded to dispel if greater consistency had
been applied in the initial exposition. Furthermore, it is not clear, in the
analytic's own terms, why intertextuality concerns 'texts' and
interdiscursivity 'genres', since genres constitute canonical texts or
typified versions of texts based on recurrent grammatical and stylistic
patterns (or any other modally specific attributes, relata and combinatorial
rules that pertain to different modes). Genres do not constitute deductive
principles that are carved in stone, but inductively produced canons based
on recurrent modes of textualization. Hence, genres should be more
adequately subsumed under intertextuality, rather than interdiscursivity.

Bhatia (2010) does localize interdiscursivity at the level of discursive
practices as professional practices at a more abstract level compared to
texts, however, from a Foucauldian point of view, confusion emerges here
by failing to approach either practices or texts as discursive formations
and, hence, as being equally accountable in terms of interdiscursivity. A
reluctance to identify differences between types of discursive practices and
texts only affords to render by the same token professional practices
amenable to categorization based on intertextuality (that is if we accept the
ascription of genre, rather than type, to discursive practices) which,
returning full-circle to the initial problematic, would run counter to the
inaugurative distinction between text and discursive practice. A similar
action-oriented approach to genre is adopted by Wodak (2008) *pace*
Fairclough (2003, p. 65) who applies it across the spectrum of discursive
formations, from discursive practices up to texts (as social texts including
situated social interaction).

There is good reason why genre should not be applied uniformly
across discursive orders and texts, this being that whereas texts, as
aforementioned, constitute outputs of practices (e.g. a book), orders

constitute malleable formations that assume stability only provisionally, based on the frame of reference that is recruited for constituting them as such. This was demonstrated earlier by recourse to the example of a film as discourse type of the order of work or leisure, depending on whether it is approached from the perspective of a lay viewer or a producer. This difference impacts directly on the interdiscursive relationship between order and type and concomitantly on their taxonomic classification in a schema ranging from meta-discourse to situated social actions.

Genre is a handy heuristic for classifying texts according to a common set of structural criteria (see chapter 3 for a more extended discussion). Fairclough (2003) suggests that some genres have more fluid boundaries than others, while maintaining a skeptical posture as to whether types such as social actions may be classified under the genre nomenclature. This skeptical attitude notwithstanding, post-literary studies applications of 'genre' have been keen on connecting "a recognition of regularities in discourse types with a broader social and cultural understanding of language in use" (Freedman & Medway, 2005, p.2). In this context, Bakhtin's assertion that genre conventions display greater plasticity compared to rules of syntax has been increasingly shared among genre theorists, especially where dynamically shifting conventions are involved in discourse communities. Nevertheless, I think that it merits highlighting that Foucault's post-structuralist approach to discursive formations generates an ontological distance between such formations and more rigid structures, such as genres. This does not imply that discursive orders may not be typified, but that this typification differs markedly from the structuralist undertaking of applying a genre-related check-list, while being more akin to the outcome of a reading strategy whereby a discursive apparatus is recognized as being instantiated in a social practice (cf. Rossolatos, 2017a). This typification is possible, as noted by Miller (2005) *pace* Halliday (1978), because discursive orders are not recurrent constellations of pure materiality, but semiotic structures as entextualized, memorable, and repeatable forms of discourse (Bauman, 2004). In this sense, discourse types are related to orders in a manner that is more defining of Wittgensteinian family resemblances rather than genre.

The praxiological battleground against discursivity

The so-called practice turn was inaugurated in the late 90's with a promise of offering a novel account of the constitution of society or, rather, of social order, based on the arrangement of social practices. The practice turn emerged as an expressed challenger to the cultural turn in

social theory, but also to the preponderance of discourse in effectively accounting for sociocultural practices. Schatzki (2002) presents this turn as a social ontology, capable of accounting for all social, institutional, cultural organizational forms under the catch-all descriptor social practices. To this end, he engages dialogically with an eclectic array of theories across the humanities and the social sciences, from Heidegger's social ontology, Foucault's and Laclau & Chantal Mouffe's theories of discursivity, to early Wittgensteinian pragmatics and Latour's Actor Network Theory (ANT), among others. Lately, praxiology has been gaining momentum, although still being beset by the theoretical and methodological ambiguities that plague perspectives at their nascent stage.

Foucault had already alluded to discursive practices as social practices as early as in the *Archeology*, while the full-fledged practice turn was undertaken in his post-structuralist period, that is in the post *Archeology* writings. In essence, the 'practice turn' had already been taken ever since the *Archeology*. In Foucault's own words: "what I try to analyze are practices: the logic immanent to a practice, the strategies that support this and, consequently, the way individuals—freely, in their struggles, in their confrontations, in their projects—constitute themselves as the subjects of their practices or refuse on the contrary the practices offered to them" (Djaballah, 2008, p.218).

The similarities between Foucault's conceptualization of social practice as discursive, but not strictly linguistic while encompassing embodied and largely tacit (yet questionably so, as argued by Turner [1994, 2001]) interactions, and Wittgenstein's notion of language games have been amply noted in the extant literature: "similar to Wittgenstein's 'game', a practice is a preconceptual, anonymous, socially sanctioned body of rules that govern one's manner of perceiving, judging, imagining, and acting" (Fynn, 2005, p.31). However, discursive practices are not equivalent to social practices as approached from a praxiological lens.

The ontological realist leanings of praxiology

Schatzki's (2002) praxiology that is heavily influenced by Latour's ANT, adopts an ontologically realist perspective, at its most naïve, that is by portraying social practices as assemblages of non-hierarchically distinct artefacts, humans, processes, sayings (Schatzki's term for utterance or enunciation, in Foucauldian terms) whose systematic arrangement is not the outcome of discursive formations, but of directly reflective descriptions. This realistic epistemological posture cuts through the entire praxiological perspective and runs counter to the radically constructivist