

Some practical hints: how to do a discourse analysis



The link between “Narratives” and “Discourse Analysis”

One out of appr. 54.000.000 findings for “discourse + narrative” ...:

“difference between narrative and discourse

by David Ponka - Friday, 19 October 2012, 6:34 PM

hi everyone,

after reading some of your articles, i am wondering if anyone can help define the precise difference between narrative and discourse analysis accounts of illness.

is discourse a subset of narrative accounts in that it involves analysing a conversation between two or more people, or is narrative a subset of discourse in that it involves temporal accounting of illness experience, or do they overlap in some other way?

many thanks if you can clarify this for me. cheers, david”

Discourse Analysis ...

- ... is a qualitative, not quantitative method in social sciences
- ... concerns acts of communication, and are therefore part of social practices
- ... address a process (a discourse), in which members of a society constitute (construct) notions, concepts, facts, convictions, norms ...
- Narratives are discourses, which develop along the time line (whereas others may build around systematic topics, like immigration, welfare, life-work-balance etc.)
- “Discourse Analysis” is a well established methodology in social sciences (whereas “Narrative Analysis” does not exist as a separate methodology)

What do you do, when you analyse narratives (as special discourses)?

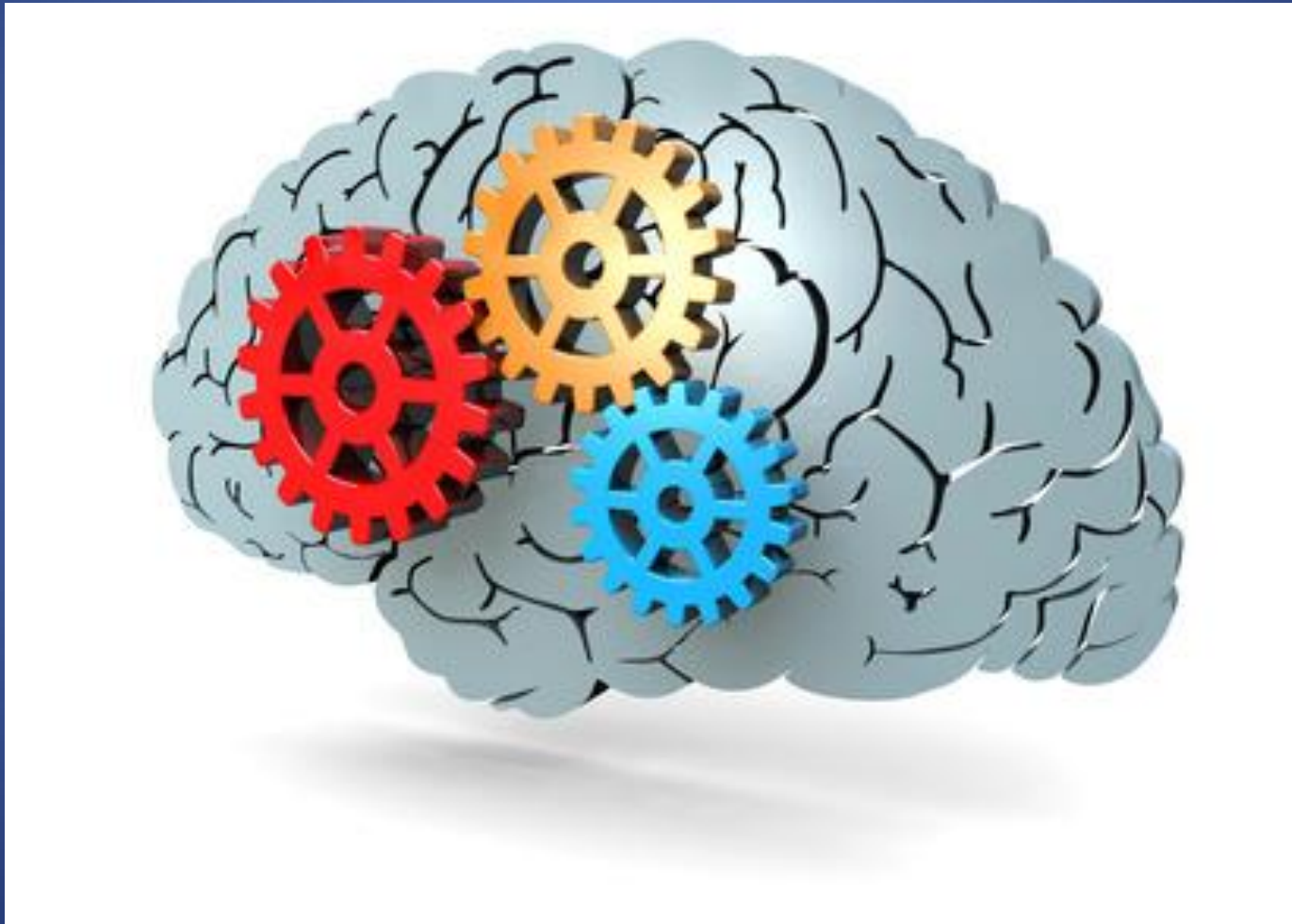
Some very basic tools ...:

1. You identify key words, which are central for a certain perception developed face to a given historical event or evolution.
 - Maastricht Narrative 1: “Single European Act + Common Market + Delors Committee + Maastricht Treaty” ... Google these concepts and you find the discourse (narrative) which links them into a (more or less) coherent story.
 - Maastricht Narrative 2: “Gorbachev + Perestroika + Berlin Wall + Re-unification + Maastricht” ... same procedure

2. You identify key arguments (logical connections, type causality) between issues or events, and find out who uses these arguments:

- Maastricht Narrative 1: “The way to the Common Market led consequently to Monetary Union”
- Maastricht Narrative 2: “The breakdown of the Eastern Block obliged the Europeans to tighten their integration.”

Connecting key words to arguments ...



3. You connect the sources, where you found key words and arguments with each other and you find out more about the communication on these components:

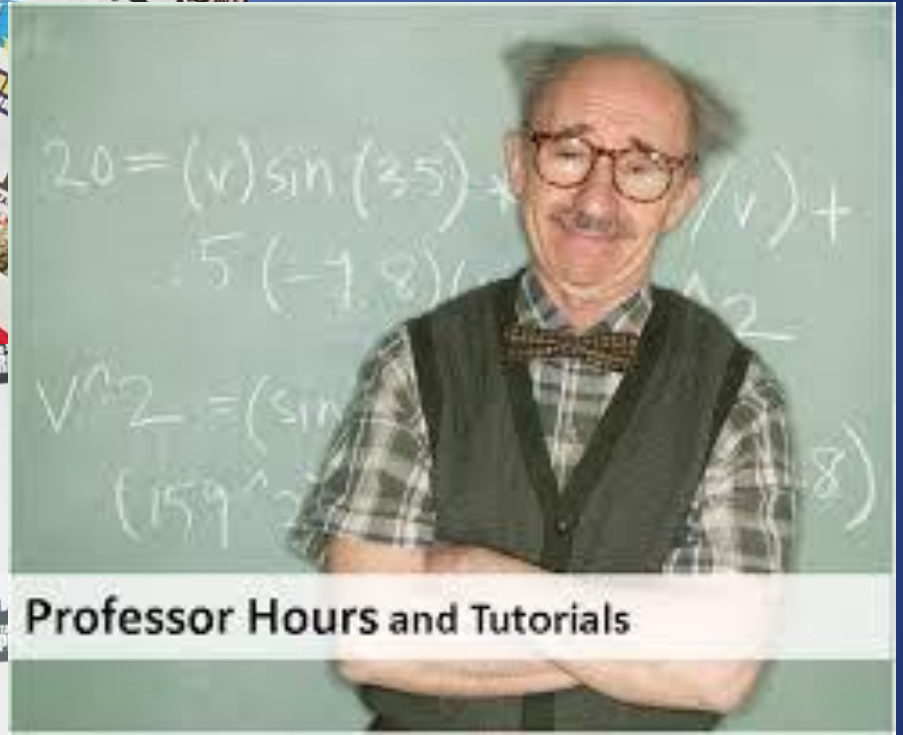
- Who launched the discourse?
- Who coined the key terms? Who quoted them?
- Who translated them?
- How did they become common wisdom?
- Who opposed the dominating narrative (discourse)?

Communicating arguments ...



4. You select contributors to such discourses – who shaped them? Where and when?

- Politicians? Analyse speeches, press conferences, interviews, declarations ...!
- Journalists? Analyse newspapers, TV-news, journals, interviews ...!
- Academics? Analyse articles, books ...!
- Find out, to which extent these discourses reached the whole or part of the society! (segmented discourses are frequent!)



Professor Hours and Tutorials

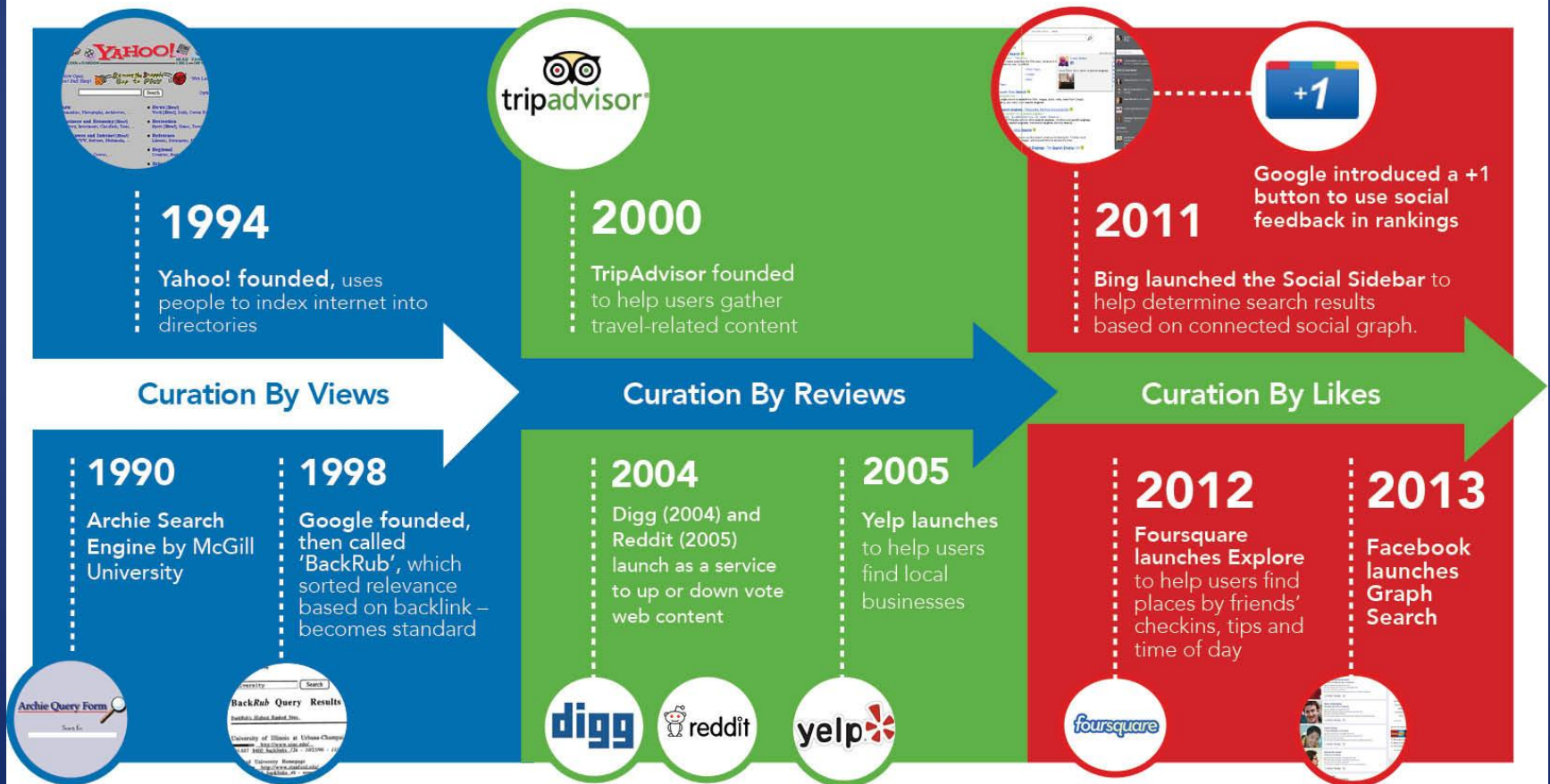
5. For narrative discourses in particular: Put them in the timeline!

- Find out who started the process of shaping such a discourse!
- Find out how much time it needed and which means to spread it out!
- Find out how controversies arose around these narrative discourses!
- Find out whether they gained the status of generally accepted historical knowledge or whether they were replaced by alternative discourses!

... a time-line ...:

Search Has Always Been Social

The History of Social Search



... and one bibliographical hint

(out of the 54.000.000 ...)

Thomas Diez:

Europe as a Discursive Battleground.

Discourse Analysis and European Integration
Studies

In: Cooperation and Conflict March 2001, vol.
36, no. 1, p. 5-38