

Foucault's Archaeological method

In discussing Schein, Checkland and Maturana, we have identified a 'backcloth' against which these individuals operated. In each case, this backcloth has become more explicit, although never explicitly formulated as such:

- In Schein, it was a backcloth of diagnostic skills "anchored deeply in social psychology, sociology, and anthropology".
- In Checkland, SSM is used as a methodology for constructing "rich pictures" which can emerge as characterisations of the effects of applying different Weltanschauung's. These Weltanschauung's are approached through analyses 2 and 3, although they appear very much as extrapolations and extensions around the fundamental analysis based on 'M'.
- In Maturana, primacy in the constitution of the system is given to the effects of the linguistic/languageing medium : "the individual ontogenies of all the participating organisms occur fundamentally as part of the network of co-ontogenies that they bring about in constituting third-order unities." 'Systems' as described by Checkland *per se* (goal-seeking systems) become a special case of system within the more general category of 'autopoietic' system. So whereas, in Checkland, soft systems are placed in a 'political' context, in Maturana, the constitution of this context is itself included in the formulation of 'system': third-order unities formed against the backcloth of the linguistic/languageing medium.

But although Maturana provides a richer descriptive basis for approaching organisation, there is still this problematic of the 'cut' and the identification, with a 'symptomatics' of the subject brought forth as a result.

Foucault arrives at the same problematic, therefore, as Maturana, with his archaeology of knowledge¹. His later development of the genealogical approach is an attempt to address this problematic in terms of 'strategies' of subjectification offered by discursive/non-discursive formations. According to this approach, Weltanschauung is identified with Foucault's discursive formation, elaborated in his "Order of Things"² and "Archaeology of Knowledge"³.

Foucault went on to elaborate the nature of non-discursive formations using the same analytical methods. By problematising the places taken up by subjects in relation to these discursive and non-discursive formations, he introduced notions of power in the way these formations over-determined the 'choices' of individuals..... *currency* is therefore a currency of power, and can be analysed in the same terms as

¹I think there are inherent difficulties in this way of approaching the problematic of the subject, which I have written about in "Lacan and Maturana: constructivist origins for a 3⁰ Cybernetics" with J.V. Kenny . Communication and Cognition Vol 25. Number 1 pp73-100 1992.

There are equal difficulties, although of a different nature, in Foucault's approach. Some of these are elucidated in Dreyfus and Rabinow's "Michel Foucault: beyond structuralism and hermeneutics" University of Chicago Press. 1982 and Gutting's "Michel Foucault's archaeology of scientific reason". Cambridge University Press 1989. All agree, nevertheless, on the value and importance of Foucault's archaeological method.

²"The Order of Things". Michel Foucault. Tavistock Publications 1970.

³"The Archaeology of Knowledge" by Michel Foucault. Tavistock Publications 1972.

used by Foucault. This formulation of Power/Knowledge⁴ is very consistent with Maturana's concept of power as obedience.

The Archaeology of Knowledge

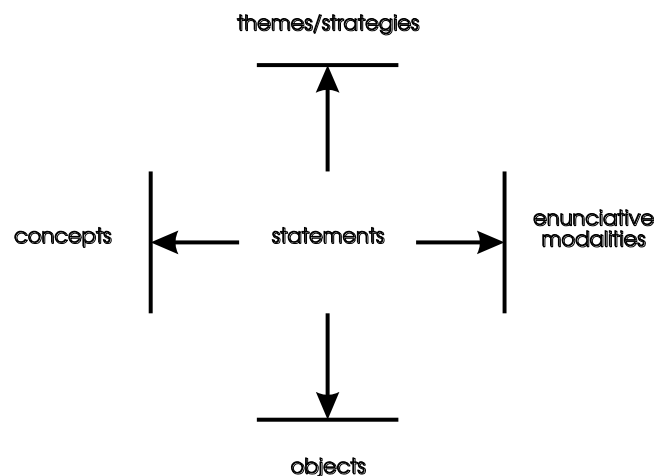
In constructing the archaeology of knowledge, Foucault is arguing that the speaking-and-listening, spoken of in the Schein paper, takes place in the context of a "discursive formation". This is his formulation of the speaking being's particular relation to the linguistic/languageing medium. The relationship between the discursive formation and non-discursive formations can change, passing over a number of thresholds:

- "positivity", in which there is an emergence of a discursive formation governing the formation of statements.
- "epistemologisation", in which epistemic norms of coherence and verification are established.
- "scientificity", in which methodologies emerge establishing precision and rigor.
- "formalisation", in which the discursive formation takes an axiomatic form.

These thresholds can be thought of as progressive steps towards codification of a non-discursive formation.

These formations operate in relation to *statements* in ways which parallel the contexts within linguistics whereby *speech acts* derive their illocutionary force/performativity⁵. There are four constituents of a formation:

- "objects" - rules for the formation of objects, defined in terms of



- social locii/surfaces of emergence
- authorities of delimitation
- symptomatic properties/grids of specification
- "concepts", which establish logical/methodological relations of ordering; attitudes of acceptance or rejections (fields of presence, concomitance and

⁴"Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and other writings by Michel Foucault 1972-1977" by Colin Gordon (Ed). Harvester Press 1980.

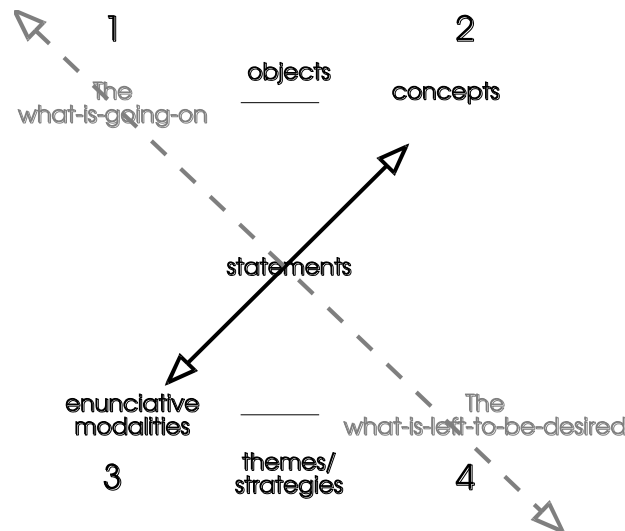
⁵J.L Austin originally developed the notion of the performative utterance in the William James Lectures at Harvard University in 1955. How to do things with words OUP 1962. Jean-Francois Lyotard develops it further in The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge Manchester University Press 1984.

memory); procedures of intervention (rewriting, transcribing, translating); and methods of approximation (domains of validity, procedures for applying, and methods of systematising).

- "enunciative modalities" - functions of the context which give 'illocutionary force' to what is being enunciated:
 - the right of certain people to use speech
 - institutional sites
 - the position of the subject *vis à vis* the objects
- "themes/strategies" - the formation is not wholly over-determining. Foucault refers to the points at which it is under-determining as "points of diffraction". Themes/strategies are constellations of particular treatments of these points of diffraction in relation to other constellations and in relation to non-discursive contexts.

"Strategies" therefore become strategies of subject-formation, in the sense of strategy as "the management of ignorance"⁶.

We can see this formation as the dual of the speaking-and- listening schema from the Schein paper:



"Readings" are being made of "statements" constituted against the backcloth of a discursive/non-discursive formation, made up of objects, concepts, enunciative modalities and themes/strategies⁷.

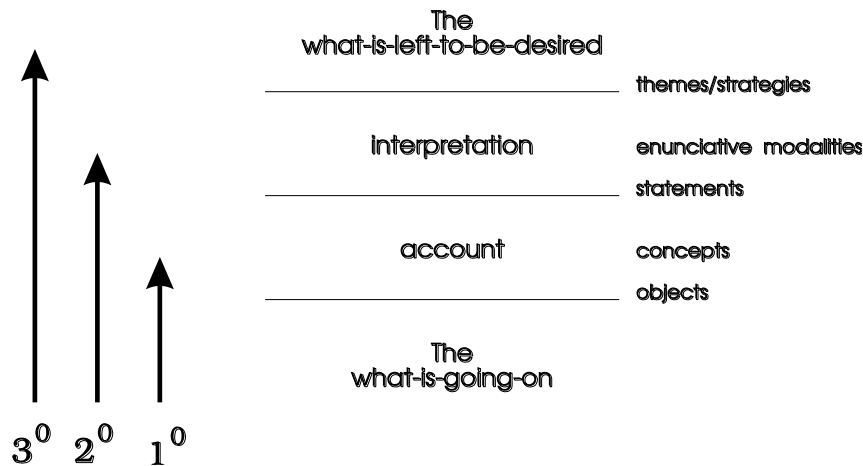
⁶I have borrowed this description of strategy from Inglis' "The Management of Ignorance: a political theory of the curriculum" Blackwell 1985.

⁷The four Lacanian discourses, doubled to include their perverse forms, describe the different ways in which subjects invent their being-in-relation-to-others in a languaging/linguistic domain. The economy of discourses arises when these are situated against the particular backcloth of a discursive formation. My first attempt at formulating this is in "The economy of discourses: a third order cybernetics" with J.V. Kenny. Human Systems Management Volume 9 Number 4 1990 pp 205-224.

Strategy ceilings

We can now return to the notion of strategy ceilings and their relation to the currencies of power. The speaking-and-listening 'Z' can be put in the same arrangement as the 'levels' of the Maturana ordering to reflect WHAT is being said HOW by WHO to WHOM, and WHY. We can now identify the strategy ceilings in terms of how much of the discursive formation is made explicit:

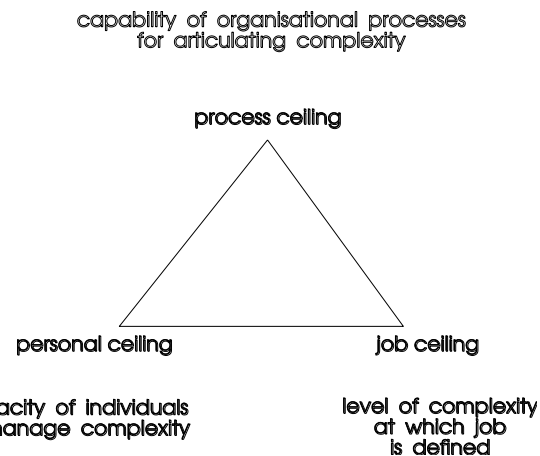
- With the 1^0 "functional/professional" ceiling, the ceiling is set by the



concepts, within which the nature of objects is rendered problematic. All other 'levels' are present, but remain implicit.

- With the 2^0 "positional" ceiling, the ceiling is set by the enunciative modalities - who is authorised to speak for the interests of the organisation.
- With the 3^0 "relational" ceiling, the ceiling is set by the what-is-left-to-be-desired, as it manifests itself through themes/strategies.

Thus there are now three approaches to this notion of strategy ceiling, the capacity of individuals to work with complexity at the different levels, the extent to which they are 'authorised' to by the place they are given in the non-discursive formation which the organisation *is*, and finally, by the level at which the discursive formation sustains explication: Of course all three have to be intervened on if the ceiling is to be raised, since each implicates the other.



The place of the subject

The three dilemmas used in "Intent and the future of Identity"⁸ are based on the three "doubles" which Foucault introduced in his "The Order of Things". I list them below, together with their names in the 'Intent' paper:

⁸Intent and the future of Identity in Richard Boot, Jean Lawrence and John Morris (eds) "Creating New Futures: A Manager's Guide to the Unknown" McGraw-Hill. 1994

- The empirical and the transcendental
The command dilemma: bottom-up vs top-down
- The 'cogito' and the unthought
The communications dilemma: say-how (espoused theory) vs know-how (theory-in-use)
- The retreat and return of the origin
The control dilemma: affiliation vs alliance

Of these dilemmas, it is the third one which is most difficult to understand. In essence, the 'origin' is the origin of the discursive formation, insofar as its "history" can be traced back in time.

The third dilemma arises because discursive formations are never wholly over-determining, and there are always also choices as to the strategies which may be assumed in relation to them. Affiliation is therefore to some origin located in the past which is traced through the assumption of some historical/evolutionary narrative which removes these choices. Alliance arises when some creative rupture is introduced into this series, through the assumption of some new strategy⁹.

These doubles were formulated by Foucault as the doubles which are characteristic of the problematics of human being. The intent paper identifies a fourth dilemma, which is the human dilemma described as an *ethical dilemma: positional vs relational*. It was this fourth dilemma which Foucault approached in his genealogical method, and which I think is better approached through Lacan¹⁰. The three forms of govern-mentality¹¹ directly relate to this progression of doubles, as they are opened up, as well as to the 'orders' of ceiling:

Foucault's doubles 'Identity' dilemmas	empirical & transcendental command: top- down vs bottom- up	'cogito' & unthought communications: say-how vs know- how	retreat & return of origin control: affiliation vs alliance	orders of strategy ceiling
sovereign	top-down	say-how	affiliation	

⁹In what follows, there is therefore a distinction between the performative organisation, which is constituted in such a way as to include a multiplicity of formations; and performativity for the subject, which, at the limit, must arise whenever the subject acts *as if* the act is authorised. "Institution as Symptom" is an approach to the individual which sees institutions as agglomerating around these acts....

¹⁰Although Foucault provides a way of approaching the perverse discourses, and in these terms the desire of the Other, he does not deal with the problematics of the desire of the desire of the Other. He makes a place for it, however, which he seeks to approach through applying an archaeological analysis to the power/knowledge effects of formations..... in the same way that we are proposing to do with organisations.

¹¹The Foucault Effect: studies in Governmentality edited by Burchell, Gordon and Miller Harvester 1991. Given by him in 1978, Foucault argues that once the Law has been separated from the King, a form of juridical governance emerges which has evolved from being dominated by the interests of the State to being dominated by the interests of economics - the Welfare State. Now, however, this is beginning to break down, as judgements made under the Law are having to be modified by what is being defined as in the particular interests of subjects. Thus magistrates are referring to 'assessments' to decide how the Law is to be interpreted in each case, and the different forms of Welfare are being targeted where before they have always been Universal benefits.

juridical	-	say-how	affiliation	1st & 2nd 3rd
performative	-	-	affiliation	
ethical	-	-	-	
process of intervention	middle-out	archaeological ¹²	forensic ¹³	
psychoanalytic correlate	A<>d transference	\$<>a phantasy	\$<>D subject of drive	

- Both 1⁰ and 2⁰ ceilings are identified with the juridical form of governmentality, because they all rely on affiliation to particular forms of say-how as the basis of authority, whether rooted in a functional logic, a professional logic, or a logic of competitive advantage.
- "middle-out" process is identified with the first dilemma because of the way it brings top-down and bottom-up processes up against each other.
- The archaeological method is particularly identified with opening up the 2⁰ problematic of the themes/strategies which form the basis of the authorisation for action, because of its focus on the espoused vs in-use dilemma. To be able to sustain the possibility of different ways of resolving this second dilemma within an organisation has major implications for the organisational context (business architecture) from which performativity is derived, and through which the forms of 'rationality' emerge which authorise leadership.
- "forensic" process is identified with the third dilemma because of the way affiliation 'kills off' good ideas if they don't 'fit'. A "forensic" process is therefore a process which aims to establish the nature of these affiliations through articulating the nature of the dilemmas which a given form of affiliation suppresses.

Conclusion

It is very difficult to 'conclude' at this point. I have sought to arrive at this point in order to lay out a backcloth against which to critique "The Unconscious at Work".

The new 'concept' which arises as a result of differentiating out an archaeological process is that of *architecture*. Organisations have architectures, and there is a difference between specific and general architectures. Specific architectures 'hard-wire'/overdetermine strategies, whereas general architectures under-determine strategies - to some extent. Internal market structures are a *necessary* but not sufficient condition for creating a general architecture.

General architectures are *necessary* in human service organisations, if human beings are to be responded to as individuals. In this sense an individual is a strategy.... so we could say that the bringing about of general architectures is an extension of the ethic of psychoanalysis.

¹² The process of elaborating a triple articulation through the 'eyes' of a given discursive practice will problematise the forms of 'truth' that it supports.

¹³ Revealing the dilemmas ('points of diffraction') covered over by a given discursive practice will indicate the drives that the practice is a response to. One might say that a discursive practice 'contains' primary anxiety, and in this sense has the function of a phantasy formation.