



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK

**Aalborg Universitet**

## **Power and language**

Jørgensen, Kenneth Mølbjerg

*Publication date:*  
2006

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Jørgensen, K. M. (2006). Power and language. (pp. 1-32). Aalborg: Institut for Uddannelse, Læring og Filosofi, Aalborg Universitet.

### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- ? Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- ? You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- ? You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at [vbn@aub.aau.dk](mailto:vbn@aub.aau.dk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



# **Power and Language**

**Kenneth Mølbjerg Jørgensen**

**Management and Philosophy**  
**No. 4, 2006**

© Kenneth Mølberg Jørgensen

Power and language

The paper is a chapter from a book proposal:  
Power without Glory, Jørgensen 2006.

Management and Philosophy no. 4, 2006

ISBN 87-91943-08-6

EAN 9788791943089

Published by  
Danish Center for Philosophy and Science Studies  
Aalborg University,  
Fibigerstræde 10,  
9220 Aalborg OE  
Denmark

[www.think.aau.dk](http://www.think.aau.dk)

# Power and Language

## Contents

Power and Language.....	3
Introduction.....	3
Language games.....	5
Understanding.....	10
Power .....	14
The need for power analysis .....	18
References.....	23

## Introduction

*Power without Glory* signals a mundane, petty and ignoble understanding of power – that is, an understanding of power as ingrained in living and experiencing everyday life. Power, in other words, is ingrained in the way we talk, act and interact with each other. As a consequence *language* is at the center of analysis (Clegg, 1975; Silverman & Jones, 1976; Fairclough, 2001; Boje, 2001). Language is not perceived as an objective representation of organizational reality; rather, language is seen as creating organizational realities. This is a fundamental assumption also in studies of language and discourse in organization studies today. Language or discourse studies are often linked to an ontological position of knowledge as being socially constructed. It is from this understanding of knowledge that the interest in Foucault’s conception of power has emerged in organization studies. It is commonly linked to a postmodernist position as a distinctive form of social constructivism (Darwin, Johnson & McAuley, 2002). This ontological position separates Foucault’s conception of power from other perspectives of power in organization theory at a number of different points. Hardy & Leiba-O’Sullivan (1998, pp. 458-460) identify four points where Foucault’s conception of power is different. First, it challenges the presumption that power is something that individuals or groups of individuals have or possess. This is the presumption behind the other dimensions of power identified in Lukes’ (1974) seminal work. Power is rather a network of relations which captures the advantaged as well as the disadvantaged in its web. All individuals are subjected to power relations. Secondly, the assumption of a single autonomous individual is abandoned—instead, Foucault draws attention to how individuals are socially produced by the power relations surrounding them. In this respect, the individual is a socially constructed category of analysis with multiple fragmented identities. Thirdly, the status of the researcher is also challenged. Instead of viewing the researcher as all knowing and objective, he too is subjected to specific power relations, which influence his actions. Finally, power produces identity and values and

thus enables individuals with a sense of what it is to be worthy and competent. Power penetrates what individuals want. It penetrates what they are passionate about, what they intend to do, what they wish, what they like and dislike. Power penetrates values. One of the unique aspects of Foucault's conception of power is its social constructivist orientation, which means that moral conceptions of truth and justice cannot be defined once and for all but always depend on time, place, and mind. Such conceptions are socially produced categories and cannot thereby be separated from actors, interests and intentions. It follows that the relation between power and knowledge is critically important in Foucault's writings (e.g. Gordon, 1980).

As such, the foundation for Foucault's power analysis does not lie within theories of power but rather derives from the ontological position that reality is socially constructed – because in this universe knowledge cannot be separated from actors, intentions and interests. And within the social constructivist universe, language or discourse is the turning point. Therefore, these postmodernist writings are often positioned within the field known as *Organizational Discourse* (e.g. Grant, Hardy, Oswick & Putnam, 2004; Darwin, Johnson & McAuley, 2002). Language is thus absolutely central both in regard to *Organizational Discourse* in general but also in relation to Foucault's power concept. Therefore, I will begin the discussion by turning to Wittgenstein's philosophy (Wittgenstein, 1983) because this philosophy is more than anything concerned with the relationship between language and reality. Two principal books dominate his philosophy: *Tractatus-Logico Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 2001/1922) and the *Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein, 1983). When people distinguish between an early Wittgenstein and a late Wittgenstein, it is because the two philosophies described in these two books are so radically different from each other (Hartnack, 1994; Husted, 2000). *Tractatus-Logico Philosophicus* (*Tractatus*) is a positivist philosophy concerned with establishing objective, universal and de-contextual truths. This conception is completely abandoned in the *Philosophical Investigations* (*Investigations*) where the attempt to establish universal and decontextual truth is viewed as a misunderstanding of how we use words. Instead truth is viewed as locally and contextually conditioned. At one point in this book, Wittgenstein speaks of recognizing the effects of language "...in despite of an urge to misunderstand them" (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 119). According to Wittgenstein some of the major philosophical problems stem from a misunderstanding of how language works, and thus how we ask questions about language. Instead of seeking universal and decontextual truths we simply have to ask for how words are used in their everyday settings. Therefore Wittgenstein claims that he doesn't seek to solve philosophical problems – instead he wants them to disappear - by phrasing the question in a different manner (Husted, 2000). This sounds simple. The problem remains though that it is probably part of the Western rationalized way of speaking that questions are asked that seek to deduce universal and decontextual truths. It remains, in any case, still a dominating paradigm if not *the* dominating paradigm in science today. We need to recognize the effects of language despite the *urge* to misunderstand it. It lies deeply within us to ask questions that seek to deduce the universal truth of phenomena. A related point is that the difference between Wittgenstein's early philosophy and his later philosophy has been interpreted as the failure of positivism (Clegg, 1975, p. 5), precisely because positivism seeks universal and decontextual truths. On the other hand, the

*Investigations* claims that “words” work and this work must always be understood contextually. In this particular context Wittgenstein uses the term “everyday life”. Instead of transforming language, we have to delve into it and explore it through how it is used in everyday life (see Clegg, 1975, pp. 6-7).

The implications here in terms of understanding organizational phenomena are of course far reaching. Every event and every action has to be understood in its specific contextual setting. One of the central concepts, language games (see next section), becomes in this respect a concept that describes knowing in a broad sense. It denotes a way of *doing, speaking, thinking, and being*. As such knowing is fused with the concept of identity. Further knowing has to be understood as a social and contextual phenomenon where ways of doing, speaking, thinking and being are regulated and modified by rules such as norms, standards, procedures and so on. As mentioned before, this is why power analysis becomes critically important because knowing and being are locally and contextually conditioned – as are conceptions of truth and justice. Actors, intentions, and interests are, in other words embedded and embodied in the production and definition of truth and justice. This chapter identifies two aspects of power that are critically important in organization analysis. The first aspect of power is the relation between language and the author and has to do with the kind of truth and justice that are produced by organizational authors and writers. The second aspect of power relates to the focus of investigation: the relationship between language and the actors. This second aspect has to do with the positions, intentions and interests that different actors hold in the language games and how these influence what organizations hold as true and just. I will explore the links between power and language in the remainder of this chapter. This includes first an account of Wittgenstein’s later philosophy; second, why and how power analysis becomes critically important in organizational analysis; third, the role of organizational research is discussed given the theoretical premises identified.

## Language games

As mentioned above, *Tractatus* is characterized by the attempt to produce a universally true language about reality. The presumption here is that every word and sentence has a clear and definitive meaning independent of time and place. Sentences refer to reality— language should represent this reality (Clegg, 1975, p. 3). The *Investigations* begins with a critique of such a perception – namely the perception that language is a name-giving enterprise (Wittgenstein, 1983, §§ 1-3). According to Wittgenstein, this perception of language is a very primitive one (1983, § 2) and it doesn’t describe everything that we call language in the system. Therefore, the description is correct only within a very narrow and circumscribed region. The *Investigations* takes a diverse position, namely that the meaning of words is how words are *used*. This suggests that words change meaning in relation to the context in which they are used – they do not only have one meaning.

”I set the brake by connecting up rod and lever.”- Yes given the whole of the rest of the mechanism. Only in conjunction with that is it a brake-lever, and

separated from its support it is not even a lever, it may be anything or nothing” (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 6).

Accordingly, words have multiple meanings depending on the context in which they are used.

The concept of *language games* is introduced by Wittgenstein to emphasize this kind of interplay between language and social context. The concept does not only comprise linguistic dimensions. Language games perceives of language as a wider phenomenon, which comprises both language and the actions into which language is woven.

”We can also think of the whole process of using words in (2) as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language. I will call these games “language-games” and will sometimes speak of a primitive language as a language-game...I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the ”language-game” (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 7).

Language is not an isolated phenomenon but must be seen as part of a whole situation, which is located in specific historical circumstances and in which there are other actors and physical artifacts. The meaning of language depends on how language is used under these specific conditions. “What is supposed to show what they signify, if not the kind of use they have”, asks Wittgenstein (1983, § 10). This is what is meant by saying that word works. This work is the meaning of the words. Words become meaningless when they are isolated in script or in print, because “...their application is not presented to us clearly” (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 11). In other paragraphs Wittgenstein compares the meaning of words with the analogy of looking into the cabin of a locomotive. There are handles, which look more or less the same but mean different things. One is the handle of a crank. Another one is the handle of a valve (1983, § 12). The point is that words do not only have one meaning and that there is no one single characteristic that characterizes one word. According to Wittgenstein, it is not impossible to try to obtain one common definition of a specific word. For example, all tools modify something or every word in language signifies something. The significant point in these examples is however that nothing is gained by such an expression. We have said nothing whatsoever according to Wittgenstein. It is not of much use to us (Wittgenstein, 1983, §§ 13-14).

As such language will always represent reality only incompletely and imprecisely. It is not possible precisely to specify knowledge in language.

”Compare knowing and saying:  
how many feet high Mont Blanc is-  
how the word “game” is used-  
how a clarinet sounds.

If you are surprised that one can know something and not be able to say it, you are perhaps thinking of a case like the first. Certainly not of one like the third” (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 78).

For this reason, Wittgenstein's later philosophy has been compared with the writings of Polanyi (for example see Hall, 1979) and his central idea that "...We can know more than we can tell" (Polanyi, 1966, p. 4). Polanyi – like Wittgenstein – also emphasizes the use of that which he refers to as the explicit dimension – language. According to Polanyi, this means that knowledge is always tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge.

*"All knowledge falls into one of these two classes: it is either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge. The ideal of a strictly explicit knowledge is indeed self-contradictory; deprived of their tacit coefficients, all spoken words, all formulae, all maps and graphs, are strictly meaningless." (Polanyi, 1969, p. 195)*

Thus, language gets its meaning through how it is understood and applied. As a consequence, knowledge becomes an active process of doing, speaking, and thinking. Knowledge consists of two dimensions: a discursive and a non-discursive dimension (Gustavsson, 2001, p. 109). More precisely knowledge is the relation between the discursive and the non-discursive dimension. The concept language games – language and the activities in which language is woven - consists of a discursive and a non-discursive dimension. It is important that the discursive and the non-discursive are always viewed in relation to each other. Viewed in isolation the two dimensions become meaningless. The discursive without the non-discursive is simply empty words. This is obvious when words are seen isolated in script or in print without seeing their application clearly (see Wittgenstein's example above). Polanyi (1966, p. 18) mentions another example: Try to focus attention on the sound of a spoken word and not on its meaning—soon the word becomes nothing more than a meaningless sound (see also Hall, 1979, p. 275).

To talk about the non-discursive without the discursive is equally impossible. We lack the concepts and words with which we can communicate and make reality meaningful for each other and ourselves. It is by means of language that we can describe, analyse and understand. Thus, the comparison with Polanyi's concept of tacit knowledge should not be understood as indicating that language is unimportant. On the contrary, it becomes much more important. In Wittgenstein's later philosophy language is presented as playing an active part in constructing reality (e.g. Harré & Gillett, 1994, p. 21). In contrast the early Wittgenstein perceived language as a passive or objective picture of the world. The comparison between Wittgenstein and Polanyi is brought into the discussion here because Polanyi – similar to Wittgenstein – believes that the meaning of language is the application of language. This application follows rules, which are tacit, taken-for-granted and embedded in everyday life (Hardy & Clegg, 1996, p. 634). Polanyi uses the term tacit knowing to emphasize that what we see, recognize and do is the result of an integration of elements of which we have knowledge we cannot tell (1966, p. 6). Knowing to use words, tools and do particular things always depends on this tacit integration of elements. The meaning of the discursive, in other words, always depends on something that is non-discursive. Rules should be considered in this tacit way – as something learned and interiorized or internalized (Polanyi, 1966, p. 17) and used to accomplish and create particular things. The concept of *rules* is, in other words, ingrained in the very application



of language. Rules are tacit norms, traditions, standards, procedures, practices and so on but even if they are tacit, they are essential for the understanding and speaking of language. As such language is much more than just knowledge. Speaking and using language is about living and about being. The term “language-game” means “...that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life” (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 23). To speak a language is thus to be able to participate in a life form and use language to correct, reprimand, invite, report, describe, reflect, analyse, persuade, emphasise and so on (Harré & Gillett, 1994, p. 21; Hartnack, 1994, pp. 72-73). To learn a language is to learn how to use it, not just to speak it. This means to learn how to use language for obeying a rule, making a report, giving an order, playing a game of chess and so on. To understand the use of language is to understand customs, practices, uses, institutions and so on - “To understand a language means to be master of a technique” (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 199). Life form is linked to the presence of a standard – a custom, practice, tradition – which implies that people can be expected to behave in certain ways instead of others (Clegg, 1975, pp. 34-35). A language game is part of a tradition and is integrated with all other aspects of life including emotions, feelings and concrete activities. Thus, the discursive should not be overestimated. The discursive is woven with a great number of activities and is tied to a physical world (Favrholdt, 2003, p. 4). Language is part of an activity or a form of life, but the discursive alone does not define the life form. In reality there are lots of different kinds of knowledge, which are not discursive – at least not to a very high degree – but which are embodied knowledge. Polanyi calls this part “knowledge which is tacit” which is different from “knowledge, which is rooted in tacit knowledge” (Polanyi, 1969, p. 195). To mention a few examples, it includes basic and automatized movements like walking and running but also techniques such as skiing, the application of tools and complex knowledge, which are embodied in, to take just one example, the difficult operations of the surgeon (Flyvbjerg, 2001, see also Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986).

Inspired by Hall’s descriptions of the relationship between tacit and explicit knowledge (Hall, 1979, p. 272), the discursive and the non-discursive may be perceived as dialectically related to each other. They both require and change each other but at the same time they mutually exclude each other. This suggests that knowing is always under development. Language always changes in the interaction with reality at the same time as language itself changes reality. To use Wittgenstein’s own words, language could be compared with an ancient city:

“Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses” (Wittgenstein, 1983, p. 8).

Thus, language is not something fixed once and for all. And paragraphs and words do not have only one function. There are countless different kinds of use. Further, new types of language or new language games continuously come into existence. Others become obsolete and are forgotten. As such knowing and language are always under continuous change. But this change is always conditioned on what came before and thus of the

contextual rules-of-the-game. As such tradition and change go hand in hand. They are not opposed to each other.

Now, having clarified that words have countless kinds of use and that the meaning of words cannot be defined once and for all, the question becomes: what makes it possible to classify, for example, language as language. Wittgenstein's answer is that there is no single common essence that characterizes language. It follows that nothing general can be said that characterizes language games or life forms.

“And this is true.- Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all, - but that they are related to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all language” (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 65).

The phenomena called language have no one thing in common but languages are related to one another in many different ways. To explain these relationships, Wittgenstein introduces the concept *family resemblance*. Languages look alike - similar to the way members of a family look alike—“...build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way. – And I shall say: “games” form a family” (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 67). Thus the phenomena called language is not called language simply because they share one common characteristic that unites them. They are called language because they look like each other just as brothers and sisters look alike in terms of looks, temperament and so on. Still, they are different from each other. It is, however, not possible to draw the boundaries between languages. This is possible in relation to a specific purpose but not in relation to all purposes. But does this mean that language is useless? If, asks Wittgenstein, “I tell someone “stand roughly there” – may not this explanation work perfectly” (Wittgenstein, 1983, §88). The answer is that of course it may work perfectly. The important question is whether information is *understood* or *misunderstood*. The usability of language does not require that the meaning of language must be defined once and for all.

As a consequence, communication is not characterized by providing definitions of what the meaning is of particular phenomena. This cannot be done. Communication is like explaining to a person what a game is. It is not possible to define or express that common thing that characterizes the game. Instead, communication and understanding is achieved by means of examples.

”And this is just how one might explain to someone what a game is. One gives examples and intends them to be taken in a particular way. – I do not, however, mean by this that he is supposed to see in those examples that common thing which I – for some reason – was unable to express, but that he is now to employ those examples in a particular way. Here giving examples is not an indirect means of explaining – in default of a better. For any general definition can be misunderstood too. The point is that this is how we play the

game. (I mean the language-game with the word game)”. (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 71)

Such communication is not something that is done in default of a better. If communication were to express exact and common characteristics, the problem would still remain that this communication could be misunderstood. The point is that is how the game is played. Communication is a game played by means of examples, descriptions, analogies and comparisons. Meaning is inherent in these descriptions. It is not necessary to specify knowledge precisely in words.

”What does it mean to know what a game is? What does it mean, to know it and not be able to say it? Is this knowledge somehow equivalent to an unformulated definition? So that if it were formulated I should be able to recognize it as the expression of my knowledge? Isn’t my knowledge, my concept of a game, completely expressed in the explanations that I could give? That is in my describing examples of various kinds of game; showing how all sorts of other games can be constructed on the analogy of these; saying that I should scarcely include this or this among games; and so on.” (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 75).

As such the concept of *language games* does not just mean giving up the idea that it is possible to give a complete representation of the one thing in common. It means simply that we have to give up the very idea that this should even constitute an ideal for philosophical investigations. I will return to this question in the next section.

## Understanding

The new philosophy described in the *Investigations* is perceived as a milestone in philosophical thinking. Hartnack argues that the thoughts in this seminal book mark a new beginning; it is not a continuance or a development of others’ thoughts but a creation of something new (1994, p. 69). Harré & Gillett call it “...a new and different strand of psychology” (1994, p. 18). They argue that the second cognitive revolution derived most of its inspiration from the later writings of Wittgenstein. Thus, Wittgenstein’s later philosophy has quite radical implications for research practice. One of these implications is the apparently simple statement that instead of trying to *correct* language – that is try to deduce the essential and common truth in language – we need to *understand* language, something that locates the meaning of language in specific historical circumstances. But this difference is crucial for research practice and undermines the central premises of, for example, positivism, which seeks to deduce universal and essential truth. It is not just this point that is rejected by Wittgenstein - It is the whole idea behind it that is rejected - along with its theoretical building blocks, methods, and procedures. According to Wittgenstein, this is a super-order between super-concepts (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 97), which doesn’t even work as an ideal (1983, § 81). Because this could give the impression that such and such a language is better than other languages and this is by no means the case. Hence research is not supposed to deal with proof, truth, essence, but rather with the meaning of simple words such as chair, table, lamp and door (1983, § 97). It tries to

“...understand something that is already in plain view. For this is what we seem in some sense not to understand” (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 89). As such research is not about locating an invisible and mysterious essence among events but must be focussed on how language is used in everyday activities. Hence, everyday language is the later Wittgenstein’s main concern. It is everyday language on its own premises and not somebody else’s. This shift in focus might be difficult for the researcher to acknowledge. At one point, Wittgenstein asks:

“Where does our investigation get its importance from, since it seems only to destroy everything interesting, that is, all that is great and important? ...What we are destroying is nothing but houses of cards and we are clearing up the ground of language on which they stand” (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 118).

People fail to be struck by the most important aspects of things because of their simplicity and familiarity (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 129). According to Wittgenstein, philosophical investigations have to be turned around. It is the only way of getting rid of the erroneous idea “...of crystalline purity” (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 108). In the same paragraph he notes that:

“We are talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm.” (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 108).

Thus the discovery of the meaning of everyday life is coupled with the discovery of the meaning of time and place. The purpose of organization studies is to understand the language games played in the organization. The purpose is to understand the life forms of people inside organizations. This means that we must try to understand how people play language games in terms of framing, describing and solving problems within particular organizational contexts. In anthropology *Thick Description* (Geertz, 1973) is one example of a methodology that is inspired by Wittgenstein. The purpose of thick description is outlined by Geertz as follows.

”...We are seeking in the widened sense of the term in which it encompasses much more than talk, to converse with them, a matter a great deal more difficult, and not only with strangers, than is commonly recognized” (1973, p. 13).

According to Geertz, researchers have understood people in a life form when the researchers are able to converse with them – that is, he argues that researchers must learn to use language according to the rules of the game in the specific context that is subject of investigation. It is questionable to what extent such empathy is possible (Von Wright, 1995, pp. 20-21). But to some degree this is what researchers need to do – because it is the way that something different about reality may be learned, namely by getting to know people on their own premises. This means that a different character, form and organization of research are required. Methods are required by which researchers are able to “dig in”, “delve in” and explore everyday life (see Clegg, 1975, p. 7).

There are several different examples of such methods in organizational discourse. Grant, Hardy, Osrick & Putnam categorize these examples in two groups: *language-in-use* and *context-sensitive approaches*. Language-in-use approaches “...seek to provide a detailed examination of talk and texts as instances of social practice (Grant, Hardy, Osrick & Putnam, 2004, p. 9).” These approaches focus on talk in interaction and “...place emphasis on capturing and analysing discourse as a discrete moment that occurs in the present” (Grant, Hardy, Osrick & Putnam, 2004, p. 9). Such studies are as such extremely micro-oriented in their scope and seem to focus on the interaction in single events (Grant, Hardy, Osrick & Putnam, 2004, p. 10). As such, language-in-use approaches may be accused of being not all that context sensitive. In any case the conception of context seems to be very narrow because the discrete event is the focus of analysis – and not the relation to other events in both time and space. As such they may not be able to sufficiently capture the forces and thus the tacit rules of language games because the event is not approached properly as an *historical* event. The emphasis on historical and social factors that go beyond the text under scrutiny is what characterizes context-sensitive approaches (Grant, Hardy, Osrick & Putnam, 2004, p. 10). One example mentioned is critical discourse analysis, which analyses events from a three-dimensional framework of analysis: a text dimension, a discursive practice dimension and a social practice dimension (Grant, Hardy, Osrick and Putnam, 2004, p. 11). As such critical discourse analysis combines a language-in-use approach with a more context-sensitive approach. The approach described and adopted in this book is what I call a context-sensitive-approach. From a Foucauldian framework outlined in the next chapter, events are seen as historical events, while the study focuses less on the social interaction within discrete events. This implies a methodological weakness in the sense that language games are not approached in action, whereby direct access to how social construction takes place - in talk and action – is denied. Direct access would require for example tape or video recordings of conversations, meetings, seminars etc. Instead these events are approached only indirectly – by means of minutes, reports and interviews. The idea behind seeing events as historical events is among others to try to capture the inherent forces, contradictions, paradoxes as well as the different positions, interests, and intentions involved when people speak. As such there are innumerable forces at play in language games and therefore a sufficient understanding of them can only be obtained through a scrutiny of the specific historical and contextual conditions in which they take place. People use rules to play language games. These rules are tacit and taken-for-granted and have the character of traditions, norms, uses and so on. These rules are historically and contextually created and embedded in the language user’s ordinary use of language. It is only through scrutinizing the specific conditions, therefore, that a sense can be obtained of what values and subsequently what feelings, beliefs and attitudes are linked to particular phenomena. It is through history and traditions that one learns to value certain phenomena. For example, to understand the game of chess is not equivalent to understanding the formal rules of chess, which prescribe that the chess pieces can be moved in this or that manner. To understand the game of chess is also to understand its history, tradition, narratives, stories and so on. The same insight applies to organizations. It is through history and tradition that one begins to understand the feelings of hatred, love, passion, fear, insecurity, motivation and enthusiasm that are linked to particular

events in organizations. These forces are also what give life to new phenomena in organizations. New phenomena, such as new organization and management concepts, have to be understood locally through how they are practiced in specific historical and geographical contexts (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1998; Sevon, 1998).

Such historical forces are hard to explain, define or deduce from organizational phenomena in a positivist sense. This means that instead of trying to explain the emergence of particular phenomena, they must be understood through descriptions of the conditions in which phenomena emerge – organization studies must rely on *descriptions*.

“Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language: It can in the end only describe it.... It (philosophy) leaves everything as it is. (1983, § 124).....Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. – Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain. For what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us” (1983, § 126).

When Wittgenstein argues that we leave everything as it is, he suggests that we rely on descriptions of language games. In this connection we must remember that in Wittgenstein’s terminology, descriptions are full of meaning and life. “To leave everything as it is” is to try to approach everyday language on its own terms. Language is not given a general foundation independent of the specific conditions in organizations. Instead research in organizations relies on descriptions of how language is used in these specific conditions. As such organization studies seek to understand phenomena that are already in plain view. They are concerned with humble problems, which may often seem very natural, mundane, dull, even boring and insignificant. This includes an exploration of that which we take for granted. This is similar to the science of the concrete (Flyvbjerg, 1991a) in that it is concerned with small problems: Why are social situations organized the way they are? How did it come into being? What arguments are at play? From where do these arguments originate? In organizational terms such questions might be: Why did they make this decision instead of another and how did they do it? Why did they pick this strategy instead of another and how did they implement it. Why did people react in this way instead of another and what consequences did these reactions have? When such activities are understood, we “know” the organization. The organization is understood through descriptions of how it works; in words and actions.

Accordingly, organization studies need to be descriptive rather than explanatory. A descriptive science doesn’t pretend to explain why an organizational reality is as it is. It relies on descriptions and examples of how a particular organization works. It can describe what takes place. It can describe what went before these events took place. It can describe who and/or what is involved. It can describe the arguments and methods that people apply in the course of everyday communication. It can describe the conditions in which events take place. Finally it can describe the effects of what took place. By means of these descriptions it is possible to provide a meaningful account of the situation. Such descriptions are not themselves totally accurate or exact but, nevertheless, they are fully applicable. One must stress here that it is impossible to provide a fully accurate account.

All that is available to us is what can be seen, heard, and sensed—that which is available in the public domain (see Geertz, 1973; Cook & Yanow, 1996; Weick & Westley, 1996). This is only part of how knowledge is created. The inner mental and bodily processes, which convert this public knowledge into something else, are tacit. In the end, knowledge is only available through descriptions of how it works. It is in this sense that philosophy simply places everything before us in order to allow language games to speak for themselves. The researcher uses his or her language (in the form of theory or concepts) to describe these language games, but this language is not necessarily better than any other language. It is merely an object of comparison:

“Our clear and simple language-games are not preparatory studies for a future regularization of language – as it were first approximations, ignoring friction and air-resistance. The language-games are rather set up as *objects of comparison*, which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language by way not only of similarities, but also of dissimilarities.....For we can avoid ineptness or emptiness in our assertions only by presenting the model as what it is, as an object of comparison – as, so to speak, a measuring-rod; not as a preconceived idea to which reality *must* correspond” (Wittgenstein, 1983, §§ 130-131).

Research uses its own language and concepts to structure and describe what takes place in local contexts. This construction of meaning is *not* identical with someone else’s. That is impossible. The purpose of description is to “capture” something, which cannot be defined, namely meaning. Descriptions, therefore, are only objects of comparison. These may result in other people gaining new perspectives on reality. The criterion is not that research should mirror reality. This is quite simply not possible. The criterion is however that research provides valid, reasonable and comprehensible descriptions of contexts, where researchers and the audience (including the subjects of investigation) may be able to meet in a dialog, conversation and reflection on the forces inherent in these contexts because a common ground has been established between them. The medium for this learning is the language of the author. By discursively reorganizing the empirical material, the audience may gain different perspectives on reality. Again, this representation is a social construction in the same way that the object of research is the set of social constructions, which take place through language games in the particular organization in question (Astley, 1985).

## **Power**

Representations are social constructions of reality. This observation is the link between Wittgenstein’s later philosophy and Foucault’s conception of power. As a consequence of Wittgenstein’s later philosophy, power becomes a central problem in social and organizational studies. Language can never be a complete representation of reality. It is an incomplete representation, which relies on understanding. Through language, different realities are communicated. The descriptions represent the participants’ lifeworlds and must be understood as part of traditions, uses and practices. The concept of language games implies that there is no independently objective and de-contextualised truth or

justice. What is considered true and just are locally conditioned constructions dependant on time, place and mind (TwoTrees in Boje, 2001, pp. 5-6). Beliefs and moral conceptions are constructed through language games. To understand language games is therefore to understand how these construct reality and define problems, solutions and interpretations of events.

It follows that the values ingrained in everyday life cannot be separated from actors' intentions and interests. As observed by Lyotard (1984) and Foucault (In Gordon (ed.), 1980), power and knowledge are never independent—they condition each other. There is no knowledge without power and there is no power without knowledge. The contours of these power analytics are more fully described in Chapter 3—in this section, some aspects of power at a more general level are introduced.

There are at least two aspects of power both of which are critically important. The first aspect of power is *the relation between language and the author*. Part of this aspect relates to the writing of organization. It is the author who writes about organization. The author thereby has an important position in relation to the construction of knowledge of/about organizations. The choice of *genre* influences the way that organization is written. Hence, it affects knowledge, which is an effect of writing (Rhodes, 2001). Writing organization is a construction in the same way that actors in organization construct their realities. The author is not independent of history but is, on the contrary, a part of history. The production of truth in science is, in other words, also a social construction (Astley, 1985). Its products are linguistic categories in more or less systematic forms. It follows that organizational realities and organizational research exist in a dialectical relationship to each other (Astley, 1985, p. 506). Organizational research also has its battles, disputes and negotiations of theoretical and professional positions in the same way as organizations have their battles, disputes and negotiations between different conceptions of reality. In recent years different genre techniques and different ways of documenting research have emerged in the form of storytelling (Gabriel, 2000), narration (Czarniawska, 1999. Boje, 2001) or writing (Rhodes, 2001). Each genre has its own way of documenting and constructing knowledge for an audience.

While the author constructs language and knowledge, the author is also constructed by language. It also works the other way around, as Wittgenstein argues:

”A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside of it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.” (Wittgenstein, 1983, § 115).

Researchers and authors are part of the specific traditions with which they engage – through the process of research and writing – and in a continuous dialog.

”One engages a tradition in dialog when one writes because one writes as a moment in an ever-changing stream of consciousness greater than one's self, so that whatever matter one writes about is in one sense less important than



the veil of silence one must inevitably preserve about the tradition, a silence which enables one to write *that* in the first place” (Clegg, 1975, p. 12).

Just as our language games make it possible to understand and describe things, we are also bounded by language games and, further, these language games influence the way reality is described and interpreted. The position of the researcher is therefore a critical question because the position conditions research results (Prichard, Jones & Stablein, 2004, pp. 215-217). As such the position affects the researchers’ constructions of reality (Foucault, 1984b). This position resides in a body that requires space, sustenance, an income, effort, economic and intellectual resources.

“Important aspects would include the opportunities to develop and train in the skills required to write theses that will be accepted, the opportunities to publish, and regional and disciplinary differences in intellectual tradition and organizational practices.” (Prichard, Jones & Stablein, 2004, p. 215).

It follows that “Objective research” is simply not possible. There are at least two aspects to this problem. The first aspect is very traditional and covers the fact that science – as mentioned above - is a social construction. It covers the phenomenon that some language games of science construct reality without being able to actually communicate with the objects of science in the wider sense of the word (see Geertz, 1973, in relation to this point) and without obtaining a reasonable interpretation of this reality (see Weick & Daft, 1983, pp. 74-76, in relation to this point). The other aspect of this problem is that the author may misunderstand the language games and interpret them as if they were part of her own language game. While the first is an abuse, the second is a misunderstanding. In both cases the central question is how to move *from data to interpretation*. And in both cases, Foucault’s solution is his special way of organizing history. This is mirrored in his methods of archaeology and genealogy (discussed in detail in Chapter 3). This bottom-up analysis of power is one special way of moving from data to interpretation. It is also an attempt to go beyond the power of language – that is, the author’s presumptions, beliefs and values. The intention is to allow the author to learn something new about reality. It is an attempt to allow reality to speak for itself on its own conditions instead of speaking on the author’s conditions. This attempt is, of course, never completely successful. But the key point is not that authors and researchers should be able to liberate themselves from language – nobody would want to do that anyway – but that they are capable of opening themselves towards reality.

The second aspect of power relates to the focus of investigation: *the relationship between power and knowledge in organizations*. Certain language games are stronger than others. “To speak is to fight” (Lyotard, 1984, p. 10). There are, however, differences in the force with which people speak. It is power in the sense that some people are capable of defining the conditions for others—as Czarniawska (1997, p. 14) put it; “They decide on our jobs, where we should live, our identities”. But even if power defines the conditions for speech, it doesn’t define speech itself—“We are still co-authors of history...” (Czarniawska, 1997, p. 14). Power is, therefore, not an institutional iron cage in Weber’s sense (See Chapter 3). People always have alternatives at their disposal. Power is not the

difference between those who have it and those who do not have it (Hardy & Clegg, 1996, p. 632). Power is about defining the conditions, the positions and the validity basis of speech. It is about defining the force with which different people speak. This is a social constructive perception of power. "...in every conversation a positioning takes place, which is accepted, rejected or improved upon by the partners in the conversation (Czarniawska, 1997, p. 14).

It follows that meaning and identity are shaped through processes of negotiation. Further, the people participating in the negotiation have different possibilities of affecting the eventual outcome. People have different positions and possibilities for influencing what is true and what is just. Wenger (1998) speaks of *ownership-of-meaning*, which refers to the position of actors in terms of "...make use, affect, control, modify, or in general assert as ours the meanings that we can negotiate" (Wenger, 1998, p. 200). According to Wenger this negotiation of meaning takes place in communities of practice, which differ in terms of importance and influence. These communities are *economies-of-meaning* (Wenger, 1998, pp. 197-201). Thus, to speak of power in connection with language games is to speak of different positions and different positionings of moral perceptions and beliefs. This positioning is fluid. When applied to organization studies, these should not be conceptualized in terms of fixed roles and fixed truths (Harré & Gillett, 1994).

"Language games" is a profoundly brilliant and useful concept here as it incorporates the notion of moves, countermoves, tactics and thus positioning—just like a game. Tryggestad (1995) draws on Von Clausewitz, the seminal theorist of war, in much the same manner. Tryggestad argues that Von Clausewitz was concerned with the inner relations of war, and not what the war should be. His theory about war is that it is an uncertain and unpredictable project subjected to the vagaries of wind, weather, the landscapes, bad luck, unpredictable countermoves, food supply, weaponry, cavalry, men and other materials (Tryggestad, 1995, pp. 5-6). Accordingly, the best strategy is the ability to improvise under changing conditions. It is not the ability to stick rigidly to plans. War here is perceived as a complex social process as distinct from a repetitive machine (Tryggestad, 1995, p. 6). Wittgenstein's "language games" resemble Von Clausewitz' notion of war in many ways. Language games are under constant change and this change defines different conditions for the next moves. The game or rather the games do not take place at one place but take place in many different scenes or sets. Another useful comparison in this respect is *Tamara*, which is Los Angeles' longest running play (described in Boje, 2001). This play takes place on many different scenes and sets. It has actors, who come and go, and even the audience is rolled in and out and follow the stage acts in different scenes. It is a story, which never ends. The actors are always chasing the story, which is written from many different places and perspectives. In the same sense language games are fragmentary, inconsistent, loosely coupled, paradoxical—and they never finish. They are stories—which never end (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). They are also stories in which the meaning always depends on what comes next (see Latour, 1996, p. 42). In other words, they are *antenarrative* stories (Boje, 2001). The story is never finished and always appears to be looking for its plot.

## The need for power analysis

In sum, power now becomes a central problem in the context of applying Wittgenstein's later philosophy. It is a central problem in relation to the various disciplines of research practice: data collection, interpretation, and documentation (Prichard, Jones & Stablein, 2004). Further, power is also a central problem in regard to the concrete operations of language games in organizations. In this book I explicitly use Foucault's conception of power because power is Foucault's explicit focus. This is in contrast to, for example, Wenger and Czarniawska, who work with a notion of power. Using Foucault's power concept necessitates a critical analysis. Foucault's concepts and methods are linked to the concepts of language games and life form. Seen in a Foucauldian perspective, language games are seen as techniques for the production of specific types of truth and justice. Power is simply embedded in everyday life. It is embedded in the rules of application, understanding and interpretation of language. Power is embedded in structures, cultures and technologies (Hardy & Clegg, 1996, p. 631). It is tacit and taken-for-granted. As Hardy and Clegg (1996, p. 634) put it: "Power will always be inscribed within contextual rules of the game".

To mention an example from the literature we may take Silverman and Jones' study called *Organizational Work* (1976). They conceive of bureaucracy as a lay concept – that is, they look at how rules and procedures are applied and used by people in a bureaucracy. They are applied by bureaucrats to – among others – judge and evaluate applicants as either qualified or non-qualified. One of the points of Silverman & Jones' study is that every organization has its rules, norms and procedures for moulding and shaping the attitudes, values, and actions of its members. Every organization also has its rules, norms and procedures for controlling everyday behaviour in the organization. The strength of Silverman & Jones' work is that it describes how the organizational structure works in the everyday operations of the people in organizations. The organization is not a stable and "dead" structure. The structure works and lives through the actions of people in the organization. The study of Silverman & Jones is heavily inspired by the later Wittgenstein in the sense, that it is a study of the everyday use of words in organizations. More specifically it is a study of how the rules, standards, procedures, and routines of the organization are applied in the everyday life of organization members. Foucault's conception of power is directly linked to such rules. Power is not outside or behind these rules. Power is embedded and embodied in the application of them. Foucault's work, for example, demonstrates how professional discourses or language games construct and shape the object of their inquiry. One example is how doctors diagnose diseases. Patients thus become subordinated to the medical discourse, which consists of concepts, methods, techniques and so on. In this sense, power is directly linked to organization theory, since the concept of organization itself might be seen as a symptom of the rationalized society where more and more aspects of life become objects of professional and scientific knowledge. This point is crucial in the works of one of the major organizational theorists, Max Weber, who was interested in the connections between power, rationality and the modern organization. He described the bureaucracy as the ultimate rational form (Weber, 1971). Further, the name of the first theory within organizational theory illustrates the point all too well, "*Scientific Management*" (Taylor, 1982). The ideas of both scientific management and the bureaucracy are the presence of a number of formal rules, standards,

and routines that serve as a guide and controller of organizational behaviour. But while Taylor is the engineer who is concerned with efficiency and quality, Weber is the critical sociologist, who is concerned with the position of the individual in a rationalized world. Thus, Weber had a concern for ethics in his writings. Foucault shares this concern for ethics, as we shall see later.

One of the main purposes of Foucault's writings is to show how individuals in the present are subordinated by particular discourses or language games in society and organizations. Modern society is, according to Foucault, especially dominated by relations of power, which are gathered under the heading, *disciplinary power*. And it is also disciplinary power, which has attracted most attention in organization studies. A well-known phenomenon in this respect is "the Panopticon," which is described in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1979) and originally formulated by Jeremy Bentham. The Panopticon has attracted interest from many organizational scholars (see for example McKinlay & Starkey, 1998, p. 3; Clegg, 1998, p. 34). As McKinlay and Starkey (1998, p. 2) put it "...the Panopticon provides the image of the disciplinary society". It is a metaphor or symbol of the disciplinary society and of disciplinary power. Disciplinary power is one of the dominating forms of power in modern society (Foucault, 1979; see also Clegg, 1998, p. 31). The link between disciplinary power and the modern organization is also straightforward. In *Discipline and Punish* the emergence of disciplinary power is traced back to a period from approximately 1750 up to the start of the nineteenth century. In Foucault's book disciplinary power is contrasted with earlier forms of power through descriptions of two forms of punishment: the terrible execution of the regicide Damiens and a timetable, which, eighty years later, describes and structures in detail how prisoners live (see Foucault, 1979, pp. 3-6; see also the description in Burrell, 1998, p. 18). The latter is a manifestation of disciplinary power. These disciplinary techniques - including the Panopticon - were first applied in the prisons according to Foucault. From the prison, it spread to other parts of society:

"Prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons" (Foucault, 1979, p. 83).

Such disciplinary techniques and practices became an important element in the emergence of the modern capitalist organization. The techniques associated with disciplinary power are disciplinary practices of surveillance, which are "...micro-techniques of power which inscribe and normalize not only individuals but also collective, organized bodies" (Clegg, 1989, p. 191). Surveillance includes phenomena such as routines, rules, procedures, control and supervision. It follows that disciplinary power is at the very heart of the modern organization as described by Weber (see for example Clegg, 1989, p. 191; Clegg, 1998, p. 34; McKinlay & Starkey, 1998, p. 4; Burrell, 1998, pp. 25-26). Disciplinary practices resemble the techniques of the bureaucracy linked with the rational society (Weber, 1971). Further, the Panopticon has a certain resemblance to Taylor's "Scientific Management" (Taylor, 1982; see also McKinlay & Starkey, 1998, p. 4) - where he sought to develop the division of labor according to disciplinary techniques.

One of Foucault's most important contributions to the field of organizational studies is that he demonstrates how such disciplinary techniques and practices become part of the most intimate aspects of our lives:

"The real point is not that most of us do not live in carceral institutions and can therefore escape from their discipline but that, as individuals, we are incarcerated within an organizational world. Whilst we may not live in total institutions, the institutional organization of our lives is total. It is in this sense that Foucault's comment "prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals which all resemble prisons" has to be understood" (Burrell, 1998, p. 25).

Clegg compares Foucault's approach with Marxism and points out that Marglin and Braverman adopt a much too narrow approach to disciplinary power in that they only concentrate on the factory (Clegg, 1998, p. 34). According to Clegg, Foucault's power concept is different from Marxism in two ways. "First, control via discipline first develops not in the factory but in various state institutions" (Clegg, 1998, p. 36)—the factory is, therefore, not the birthplace of the relations of production. "Second, it is not a control functionally oriented to capitalist exploitation but to the creation of obedient bodies" (Clegg, 1998, p. 36)—power is, therefore, not external to the individual but is historical and culturally specific and internalised in people. Power is in feelings, aspirations, wishes, a sense of belonging and the obligations that come with it. Clegg believes that Foucault's analysis is different from Marxism in a third way. Bio-power (Foucault, 1978) - control of sexuality and the body - adds a third aspect beyond both Marx and Weber (Clegg, 1998, p. 37).

As such Foucault's conception of power must be understood in a much broader sense than most theories of power in organization studies. Power is *pervasive* (Buchanan & Badham, 1999, p. 40) in the sense that is deeply embedded and embodied in the processes and operations of organizations. It is embedded in the rules that regulate and control how language games are played in organizations. These control and surveillance mechanisms vary from organization to organization. I will mention two examples from Mintzberg's *Structures in Five* (Mintzberg, 1983), which, I believe, are critically important in today's society. The first is the *machine bureaucracy*, which since the advent of industrialization has been and still is important today. The control mechanisms in this organization resemble those of disciplinary power in that the organization is guided by formal rules, routines, and procedures. The second is the *professional bureaucracy*, which I believe has become even more important in today's society. The control mechanisms in the professional bureaucracy are induced through education where the rules, norms, and traditions of the profession are instilled in the professional. Through education the professional gains the right to *speak seriously* or to *produce authoritative accounts* – that is, accounts that are more qualified than the speech and actions of any man (Silverman & Jones, 1976).

There is a need in organization theory to view these regulatory and coordinating mechanisms as power as more and more aspects of organizational life become objects of

professional and scientific knowledge—and as ever more aspects are subjected to surveillance and control. The right to speak seriously and to produce authoritative accounts is also a right to judge others. As such the ethical dimension is critically important. This also applies to the professional discipline called *organizational change* or *change management*. Thus, the notion of change will not be considered as fundamentally different from other organizational processes. As such, change is not in opposition to organization as if change was considered dynamic and organization as stable. I don't work with this distinction. Instead change is not fundamentally different from any other organizational process. Change consists of language games, which work to construct, shape, and mould reality in particular ways, and which are founded in particular values. Increasingly, it has become a discipline carried out by professionals such as consultants, managers and other change agents. Thus, the name organizational change comprises a number of different language games. As such the discipline organizational change builds on concepts, methods, techniques, and procedures. It is often a very systematic discipline, which has its own norms for measuring, evaluating, and judging performance; in other words, it has its own mechanisms of surveillance.

Business process reengineering (BPR), supply chain management (SCM), balanced scorecard, the learning organization, organizational learning, value management and so on are examples of such language games, which induce or enforce new norms, new traditions, new procedures and new regulations, which both managers and workers must obey and conform to, and which construct reality in a specific way. To view these language games through the lenses of power is to give to organization and management studies a political and critical twist by which such language games might be questioned from within.

The need for power analysis is supported by a discussion in a recent ASQ (Administrative Science Quarterly) forum where the question is viewed in the context of the recent scandals in American business life - Enron, WorldCom, and Arthur Andersen (Bartunek, 2002, p. 422; Clegg, 2002, p. 428). It is argued in this discussion that the question of power gradually disappeared from organization studies from the mid to late twentieth century, probably due to the hegemonic influence of neo-positivism in US business schools. Hinings and Greenwood (2002, P. 411) argue that historically the existence of organizations was addressed at two levels; firstly, the consequences in terms of how organizations affect the pattern of privilege and disadvantage in society, and secondly, the consequences in terms of how privilege and disadvantage are distributed within organizations. They argue that the former question has practically disappeared from discussion in ASQ during recent decades. The latter has received only scant and cursory treatments. A primary reason for that is that organizational research has moved from the sociological departments to the business schools. The central question emanating from a business school "...leans more toward understanding how to understand and design efficient and effective organizations" (Hinings & Greenwood, 2002, p. 413). This question however focuses less on the moral foundation of the operations of organizations, if at all. This is, however, a critical question in contemporary society, where organizations are central to the lives and lifeworlds of so many people. Stewart Clegg pushes the argument to its uncomfortable limits. Inspired by Bauman

(1989), he argues that from the question concerned with designing efficient and effective organizations, organization scholars might as well study the holocaust. From an efficiency perspective alone, the dispatch of millions of people to their deaths was an enormous organizational achievement, both in terms of constructing identities and in terms of constructing the technological solution (Clegg, 2002, p. 428). Organization studies, therefore, cannot rely solely on economic studies of efficiency and effectiveness. Rather, they should also serve as moral education dealing with the values and ethics of present day organizations. This is not simply due to the recent extreme scandals in corporate governance in the USA and elsewhere. Foucault's power analysis should not only be applied because there is a presumption that an organization behaves amorally. Further, power analysis should not only be applied because power is necessarily unpleasant, humiliating or suppressive; nor because it is necessarily illegitimate. Finally power analysis should not only be applied in order to locate power and non-power at particular positions. It is not for these reasons that power analysis is necessary. In Foucauldian power analysis, the reasons are rather the opposite – that power is tacit, unreflected, and legitimate. Power is embedded in norms, in traditions, in usage, and in practices. It is necessary to speak of power, because it is institutionalised and legitimate but still carries with it an unequal distribution of goods, privileges, status, and positions. Due to this double-edged nature it thereby creates unequal possibilities for defining what is considered true and just. In terms of organizational change, the change activities give some people a voice, while others are silenced.

In my view, Foucauldian power analysis has not become less relevant due to the large number of different change discourses that have emerged over the past few decades. Some of these discourses work with some of the most intimate aspects of life such as values, attitudes, and identities. They tell people not only what to do but also how people should be as persons. And the foundations for doing this are often very slim (see for example Jørgensen, 2004). For this reason, Foucault's power analysis is absolutely relevant. It doesn't offer an alternative in the form of suggesting specific guidelines for behaviour. It seeks instead to offer a foundation for reflecting on the present and thus it seeks go beyond the power of language in the present. The purpose of Foucauldian power analysis is thus to question the moral perceptions and beliefs embedded and embodied in the operation of language games (this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3). The intention is not to take sides (Hardy & Clegg, 1996, p. 632), nor is it to expose some parties instead of others although my history and psycho-biography, as author, must necessarily have some impact. The purpose is to question the moral foundations linked to the distribution of goods, rights and obligations in organizations and societies. The means are quite simply to expose the concrete operations of power - how power works. Nietzsche's influence on Foucault's writings (Foucault, 1984a) should be perceived in this light, as Nietzsche dealt with morality as a historically constituted phenomenon (Nietzsche, 1992a, 1992b).

The purpose of power analysis is to bring into discussion the tacit, the unconscious, and the taken-for-granted. Foucault seeks to contribute with an understanding of everyday life in this way. He wishes to explore and open up everyday life. He thereby seeks to question the foundations of everyday life which include various taken-for-granted phenomena—

phenomena which may appear insignificant and unimportant but which are not necessarily so—as some of the examples presented later in this book attempt to show. The core idea is to open up everyday life in order to question it from within.

## References

Adolphsen, J. and L. Nørreklit (1995), Indledning Ved Oversætterne (The Translators' Introduction), in Wittgenstein, L. *Filosofiske Undersøgelser* (Philosophical Investigations). Munksgaard-Rosinante.

Alvesson, M. (2002). *Understanding Organizational Culture*. London: Sage Publications.

Alvesson, M. (1996). *Communication, Power and Organization*. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Alvesson, M. (1995). The Meaning and Meaninglessness of Postmodernism, *Organization Studies*, 16, 1047-1076.

Astley, W.G. (1985). Administrative Science as Socially Constructed Truth, in *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 30, 497-513.

Astley, W.G. & A. Van de Ven (1983). Central Perspectives and Debates in Organization Theory, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28, 245-273.

Bartunek, J.M. (2002). The Proper Place of Organizational Scholarship. A Comment on Hinings and Greenwood. In *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47, 422-427.

Bateson, G. (1972). *Steps to an ecology of mind*. The University of Chicago Press.

Bauman, Z. (1989). *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Benson, J. K. (1977). Organizations: A Dialectical View, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 22(1), 1-21.

Boelen, W.A.M. (1992). Street Corner Society: Cornerville Revisited, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 21, 1, 11-51.

Boje, D. (2001). *Narrative Methods for Organizational and Communication Research*. London: Sage.

Borum, F. (1995). *Strategier for Organisationsændring* (Strategies of Organizational Change). København: Handelshøjskolens Forlag.



Brown, A.D. (1998). Narrative, Politics and Legitimacy in an IT-implementation, *Journal of Management Studies*, 35 (1), 35-58.

Brown, J.S. and P. Duguid (2001), Knowledge and organization: A Social Practice Perspective, *Organization Science*, No. 2, 198-213.

Bruner, J. (1996). *The Culture of Education*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Buchanan, D.A. & R. Badham (1999). *Power, Politics and Organizational Change – Winning the Turf Game*, Sage Publications.

Burrell, G. (1998). Modernism, Postmodernism and Organizational Analysis 2: The Contribution of Michel Foucault. In Mckinlay, A. & K. Starkey (Eds.), *Foucault, management and organization Theory* (14-28). London: Sage.

Burrell, G. & G. Morgan (1979). *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis - Elements of the Sociology of Corporate Life*. London: Heinemann.

Burrell, G & R. Cooper (1988). Modernism, Postmodernism and Organizational Analysis: an introduction, *Organization Studies*, 9/1, 91-112.

Burrell, G. (1988). Modernism, Postmodernism and Organizational Analysis 2: The Contribution of Michel Foucault, *Organization Studies*, 9/2, 221-235.

Clandinin, D.J. & F.M. Connelly (1991). Narrative and Story in Practice and Research. In Donald A. Schön (Ed.). *The Reflective Turn: Casestudies In and On Educational Practice* (pp. 258-281). New York: Teachers College Press.

Clegg, S.R. (2002). “Lives in a balance”: A comment on Hinings and Greenwood’s “Disconnects and Consequences in Organization Theory. In *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47: 428-441.

Clegg, S.R. (1998). Foucault, Power and Organizations. In Mckinlay, A. & K. Starkey (Eds.), *Foucault, Management and Organization Theory* (29-48). London: Sage.

Clegg, S.R. & C. Hardy (1996). Organizations, Organization and Organizing. In S.R. Clegg, C. Hardy & W.R. Nord (Eds.), *Handbook of Organization Studies* (1-28), London: Sage.

Clegg, S.R. (1989). *Frameworks of Power*. London: Sage.

Clegg, S.R. (1975). *Power, Rule and Domination*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Cook, S.D.N. & D. Yanow (1996). Culture and Organizational Learning. In Cohen, M.D. and L.S. Sproull (Eds.), *Organizational Learning* (430-459). Sage:Thousand Oaks.

- Crozier, M. (1967). *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon*. The university of Chicago Press.
- Cyert, R. and J.G. March (1963), *A Behavioral Theory of the Firm*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Czarniawska, B. (1999). *Writing Management - Organization Theory as a Literary Genre*. Oxford University Press.
- Czarniawska, B. & B. Joerges (1998). Winds of Organizational Change: How Ideas Translate into Objects and Actions. In N. Brunsson & J.P. Olsen (Eds.), *Organizing Organizations* (197-236). Fagboklaget.
- Czarniawska, B. (1997). *Narrating the Organization - Dramas of Institutional Identity*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Czarniawska-Joerges, B. (1995). Narration or Science? Collapsing the Division in Organization Studies, *Organization*, 2(1), 11-33.
- Czarniawska-Joerges, B. (1993). *The Three-Dimensional Organization*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Darwin J, P. Johnson & J. McAuley (2002). *Developing Strategies for Change*. Prentice Hall.
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education*. New York: The Free Press.
- Dreyfus, H.L. & S.E. Dreyfus (1986). *Mind over Machine. The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Elden, S. (2001). *Mapping the Present: Heidegger, Foucault and the Project of Spatial History*. London: Continuum.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and Power – Language in Social Life*. Pearson ESL.
- Faubion, J.D. (Ed.) (1994). *Michel Foucault – Power – Essential Works of Foucault 1954 – 1984 – volume 3*. London: Penguin Books.
- Favrholdt, D. (2003). Socialkonstruktivisme – marmortempel eller sandslot? (Social Constructivism – Marple Temple or Sand Castle). [www.filosofi.net](http://www.filosofi.net)
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making Social Science Matter – Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again*. Cambridge University Press.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (1998). Habermas and Foucault: Thinkers for Civil Society, *The British Journal of Sociology*, 49(2), 210-233.

Flyvbjerg, B. (1991a). *Rationalitet og Magt, Bind I, Det Konkrete Videnskab* (Rationality and Power, Volume I, The Science of the Concrete). Akademisk Forlag.

Flyvbjerg, B. (1991b). *Rationalitet og Magt, bind II, Et Case-baseret Studie af Planlægning, Politik og Modernitet*. (Rationality and Power, Volume II, A Case-based Study of Planning, Politics and Modernity). Akademisk Forlag.

Foucault, M. (2003), *Society Must Be defended – Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-76*, Penguin Books, London.

Foucault, M. (1995). *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1993). Excerpts from 'The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction. In J. Natoli and Linda Hutcheon (Eds.), *A postmodern reader* (333-341). State University of New York Press.

Foucault, M. (1984a). Nietzsche, Genealogy, History. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (76-100). New York: Pantheon.

Foucault (1984b). What Is an Author. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (101-120). London: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1980). Two lectures. In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977 by Michel Foucault* (78-108), New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and Punish - the Birth of the Prison*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1978). *Seksualitetens Historie – Viljen Til Viden* (The History of Sexuality - Volume 1). København: Rhodos.

Foucault, M. (1970). *The Order of Things*. London: Tavistock.

Foucault, M. (1967). *Madness and Civilization - A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. London: Tavistock.

Fox, S. (2000), Communities of Practice, Foucault and Actor-Network Theory, *Journal of Management Studies*, 37:6, 853-868.

Gabriel, Y. (2000). *Storytelling In Organizations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gadamer, H.G. (1960). *Truth and Method*. New York: Continuum.

Gane, M. (Ed.) (1986). *Towards a Critique of Foucault*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Gane, M. (1986). Introduction: Michel Foucault. In M. Gane (Ed.), *Towards a Critique of Foucault* (1-14). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Geertz, C. (1983). Introduction. In C. Geertz, 1983: *Local Knowledge - Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (3-16), New York: Basic Books.

Geertz, C. (1973). Thick Description - Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture. In C. Geertz, 1973, *The Interpretation of Cultures - Selected Essays* (3-30) New York: Basic Books.

Gergen, K.J., Gergen, M.M. and Barrett, F.J. (2004), "Dialogue: Life and death of the organization", in Grant, D., Hardy, C., Osrick, C. and Putnam, L. (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Discourse*, Sage, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, pp. 39-59.

Gherardi, S., and Nicolini, D. (2001), "The sociological foundations of organizational learning", in Dierkes, M., Antal, A.B., Child, J. and Nonaka, I. (Eds.), *Handbook of Organizational Learning and Knowledge*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 35-60.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity - Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gordon, C. (Ed.) (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977 by Michel Foucault*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Grant, D., C. Hardy, C. Osrick & L. Putnam (Eds.), (2004). *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Discourse*, Sage Publications.

Grant, D., C. Hardy, C. Osrick & L. Putnam (2004). Organizational Discourse – Exploring the Field. In *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Discourse*, Sage Publications.

Gustavsson, B. (2001). *Vidensfilosofi* (Philosophy of Knowledge). Århus: Klim.

Habermas, J. (1987), *The philosophical discourse of modernity*, Polity, Cambridge.

Hall, R.L. (1979). Wittgenstein and Polanyi - The Problem of Privileged Self-Knowledge, *Philosophy Today*, 267-278.

Hardy, C. and S. Leiba-O'Sullivan (1998). The Power Behind Empowerment: Implications for Research and Practice, *Human Relations*, 51(4), 451-483.

Hardy, C. and S.R. Clegg (1996). Some Dare Call It Power. In S.R. Clegg, C. Hardy & W.R. Nord (Eds.), *Handbook of Organization Studies* (622-641), London: Sage.

Harré, R. & G. Gillett (1994). *The Discursive Mind*. London: Sage.

Hartnack, J. (1994). *Wittgenstein og Den Moderne Filosofi* (Wittgenstein and the Modern Philosophy). København: C.A. Reitzels Forlag.

Hatch, M.J. (1997). *Organization Theory - Modern Symbolic and Postmodern Perspectives*. Oxford University Press.

Haugaard, M. (1997). *The Constitution of Power. A Theoretical Analysis of Power, Knowledge and Structure*. Manchester University Press.

Heidegger, M. (1969). *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Reprinted 1996. New York: Harper Torchbooks.

Henriksen, L.B., L. Nørreklit, K.M. Jørgensen, J.B. Christensen & D. O'Donnell (2004). *Dimensions of Change – Conceptualising Reality in Organizational Research*, Copenhagen Business School Press.

Hinings, C.R. & R. Greenwood (2002). Disconnect and Consequences in Organization Theory, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47: 411-421.

Homans, G.C. (1966). *Menneskegruppen* (The Human Group). Jørgen Paludans Forlag.

Husted, J. (2000). *Wittgenstein*, Centrum/Gyldendal.

Imershein, A.W. (1977). Organizational Change as a Paradigm Shift. In J.K. Benson (Ed.), *Organizational Analysis - Critique and Innovation* (pp 35-45). Beverly Hills, London: Sage Publications.

Israelsen, P., Hanne Nørreklit og Lennart Nørreklit (2002). Validity of Management Control - Towards Constructivist Pragmatism: Working paper, *Department of International Business*, Aarhus University.

Jørgensen, K.M. (2004). Creating Value-based Collaboration – Life Forms and Power in a Change Project, *M@n@gement*, 7: 3, 85-107.

Jørgensen, K.M. (2002). The Meaning of Local Knowledges. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 18, 29-46.

Jørgensen, K.M. (2000). Management Struggles with Organizational Changes. Ph.D. Dissertation, Aalborg University: Department of Business Studies.

Kanter, R.M. (1983). *The Change Masters - Innovation and entrepreneurship in the american corporation*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Kendall, G. & G. Wickham (1999). *Using Foucault's Methods*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Knights, D. & H. Willmott (Eds.) (2000). *The Reengineering Revolution – Critical Studies of Corporate Change*. London: Sage Publications.

Latour, B. (1999). *Pandora's Hope - Essays on the Reality of Social Science*. Cambridge, Massachusetts - London, England: Harvard University Press.

Latour, B. (1996). *Aramis, Or the Love of Technology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lave, J. and E. Wenger (1991), *Situated Learning – Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, Cambridge University Press.

Lukes, S. (1974): *Power - A Radical View*. Macmillan.

Liotard, J.F. (1989). The Sign of History. In A. Benjamin (Ed.), *The Lyotard Reader* (393-411), Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.

Liotard, J.F. (1989). The Tensor. In A. Benjamin (E.) *The Lyotard Reader* (1-18), Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.

Liotard, J.F. (1984). *The Postmodern Condition - A Report on Knowledge*. Manchester University Press.

Machiavelli, N. (1988). The Prince, in Q. Skinner & R. Price (Eds.). *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

March, J.G & H.A. Simon (1958). *Organizations*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Martin, J. (1992). *Cultures in Organizations - Three Perspectives*. Oxford University Press.

Martin, J. & P. Frost (1996): The Organizational Culture War Games: A Struggle for Intellectual Dominance. In S.R. Clegg, C. Hardy & W.R. Nord (Eds.), *Handbook of Organization Studies* (599-621), London: Sage.

Marx, K. (1978). The Grundrisse, in R.C. Tucker, (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader* (pp. 221-293). New York: Norton.

Mckinlay, A. & K. Starkey (1998). Managing Foucault: Foucault, Management and Organization Theory. In A. Mckinlay & K. Starkey (Eds.), *Foucault, Management and Organization Theory* (1-13). London: Sage.

Mintzberg, H., B. Ahlstrand & J. Lampel (1998). Strategy Safari - A Guided Tour Through the Wilds of Strategic Management. New York: The Free Press.

Mintzberg, H. (1983). Structures in five. Englewood, N.J.: Prentice hall.

Monk, R. (1995). Ludwig Wittgenstein - Geniets Forpligtelse (The Duty of Genius). Copenhagen: Nordisk Forlag.

Morgan, G. (1986). *Images of Organization*. Thousand Oaks, London: Sage Publications.

Morsing, M. (1995). *Omstigning til Paradis - Oticon i processen fra hierarki til spaghetti* (Change for Paradis? - Oticon in the process from hierarchy to spaghetti). København: Handelshøjskolens Forlag.

Nietzsche, F. (1994). On the Genealogy of Morality, in K. Ansell-Pearson (Ed.), *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nietzsche, F. (1992a). Beyond Good and Evil. In W. Kaufmann (Ed.), *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (179-436), New York: The Modern Library.

Nietzsche, F. (1992b). On the Genealogy of Morals. In W. Kaufmann (Ed.), *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (437-600), New York: The Modern Library.

O'Connor, E. (1999). The Politics of Management Thought: A Case Study of the Harvard Business School and the Human Relations School, *Academy of Management Review*, 24(1), 117-131.

O'Donnell, D. (2004), "Theory and method on intellectual capital creation: Addressing communicative action through relative methodics", *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 294-311.

Parker, M. (1992). Postmodern Organizations or Postmodern Organization Theory?, *Organization Studies*, 13, 1-17.

Pfeffer, J. (1992). *Managing with Power - Politics and Influence in Organizations*. Boston Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Press.

Polanyi, M. (1969). Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading. In M. Green (Ed.), *Knowing and Being - Essays by Michael Polanyi* (181-207). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Polanyi, M. (1966). *The Tacit Dimension*. Gloucester, Mass:Peter Smith.

Powell, W.W. and P.J. DiMaggio (Eds.) (1991), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Prichard C., D. Jones & R. Stablein (2004). Doing Research in Organizational Discourse – The Importance of Researcher Context. In D. Grant, C. Hardy, C. Oswick & L. Putnam (Eds.), (2004). *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Discourse*, Sage Publications.

Pålshaugen, Ø. (1998). *The End of Organization Theory?* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Rhodes, C. (2001). Writing Organization. *Advances in Organization Studies*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Selznick, P. (1984). *TVA and the Grass Roots - A Study of Politics and Organization*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sennett, R. (1999). *Det Fleksible Menneske*. Forlaget Hovedland.

Sevon, G. (1998). Organizational Imitation in Identity Transformation. In N. Brunsson & J.P. Olsen (Eds.), *Organizing Organizations* (237-258), Fagboklaget.

Silverman, D. & J. Jones (1976). *Organizational Work – The Language of Grading the Grading of Language*. London: Collier Macmillan.

Smircich, L. (1983). Concepts of Culture and Organizational Analysis, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28(3), 339-358.

Suchman, L.A. (1990). *Plans and Situated Actions: The Problem of Human-machine Interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, F.W. (1982). The Principles of Scientific Management. In P.O. Berg & P. Daudi (Eds.), *Traditions and Trends in Organization Theory: A Book of Readings* (44-59). Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Tryggestad, K. (1995). *Teknologistrategier og PostModerne Kapitalisme - Introduksjon av Computerbasert Produksjonsteknikk* (Technology Strategies and Postmodern Capitalism - The Introduction of Computerbased Production Technology). Lund Studies in Economics and Management 26, The Institute of Economic Research: Lund University Press.

TwoTrees, K. (1997). Stories with mind, presentation at the April, 1997, postmodern organization track of the Standing Conference for Management and Organizational Inquiry.



Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the Field - On writing Ethnography*. The University of Chicago Press.

Von Wright, G.H. (1995). Videnskab og Fornuft – Et Forsøg På Orientering (Science and Rationality – An Attempt of Orientation). Herning: Systime.

Weber, M. (1971). *Makt og byråkrati - Essays om Politikk og Klasse, Samfunnsforskning og Verdier* (Power and Bureaucracy - Essays about Politics and Class, Social Research and Values). Gyldendal, Norsk Forlag.

Weick, K.E. & R. Daft (1983). The Effectiveness of Interpretation Systems. In K.S. Cameron & D.A. Whetten (Eds.), *Organizational Effectiveness - A comparison of Multiple Models* (71-93). New York: Academic Press.

Weick, K.E & F. Westley (1996). Organizational Learning: Affirming an oxymoron. In S.R. Clegg, C. Hardy & W.R. Nord (Eds.), *Handbook of Organization Studies* (440-458), London: Sage.

Weick, K.E. (1979). *The Social Psychology of Organizing*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice - Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge University Press.

Wickham, G. (1986). Power and Power Analysis: Beyond Foucault? In M. Gane (Ed.), *Towards a Critique of Foucault* (149-179). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Wittgenstein, L. (1983). *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. First published 1958.

Wittgenstein, L. (2001). *Tractatus-Logico Philosophicus*, Routledge. First published 1922.