

On the Methodology of Dispositive Analysis

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Abstract

Foucault never wrote an explicit methodology of discourse analysis, let alone dispositive analysis. In this paper, I first briefly outline definitions of the dispositive, drawing on a combination of the everyday French language use of the word 'dispositif' and Foucault's own writings. From Foucault's emphasis on the heterogeneity of the elements of the dispositive, I look at how Siegfried Jäger has suggested using this characteristic of the dispositive to operationalise dispositive analysis. I propose to add a semiological approach into the method of dispositive analysis, using an example from my own work on the analysis of state architecture in Germany and introducing the concept of the 'Foucauldian sign'. Then Jürgen Link's writings on the dispositive are considered, which add the concepts of power and knowledge into the analysis. The paper concludes with a graphical representation of the dispositive, and a suggestion of a three step process of dispositive analysis.

Keywords: *Dispositive, Methodology, Heterogeneity, Semiology, Power*

1. On the methodology of dispositive analysis

1.1 Introduction

In some reviews of the historical development of linguistics, a movement from smaller to larger units of study is presented.¹ From initial preoccupations with the word, and in fact its smaller units of phonology and morphology, the sentence then became the largest unit of linguistic study. Attention to pragmatics widened the view again, and more recently text linguistics has emerged. Text linguistics in turn is in some quarters now felt to be facing a challenge from discourse analysis as the next largest unit of analysis.² Each time the development was prompted by a feeling that while the current unit of study was important, it was not enough to explain all the phenomena that the researchers encountered. In order to get to grips with them, it was necessary to move to the next largest unit of language.

The step from discourse to dispositive with Foucault can be seen as part of a similar process. After *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *The Order of Things* where he had focused on the development of knowledge in the form of statements, archives and epistemes, he then introduces the term dispositive to expand the theoretical basis of his analyses.

There are two points (at least) that the dispositive adds over discourse as a unit of analysis. One is the question of the heterogeneity of what can be studied with dispositive analysis as opposed to discourse analysis. The second is the question of power. In this talk I shall use the work of two German scholars to show how the questions of heterogeneity and of power are worked into the concept of the dispositive. Furthermore, I shall consider how reflection on these two points can be used as part of the development of a method of dispositive analysis.

1.2 Defining the dispositive

Before addressing the methodology of dispositive analysis, it is necessary to outline the definition of a dispositive. Rather than go straight to Foucault, I would like first to recall that in everyday French, the word 'dispositif' is used to describe a system set up for a specific purpose. For example, an alarm system, consisting of say motion and/or heat sensors installed in the place where you want to apprehend burglars, attached to the alarm itself by cables, and a control panel inside the house for which only the owner knows the code to arm and disarm it, would be labelled a 'dispositif d'alarme'. An intercom to enter a block of flats is known as a 'dispositif de communication'.

Foucault's conceptualisation of the dispositive in discourse theory is perhaps not too far removed from these prosaic examples. He says that a dispositive is a 'decidedly heterogeneous ensemble' (Foucault 1994 (1977): 299) of elements ranging from buildings to laws to scientific statements.³ The elements of the alarm system are indeed decidedly heterogeneous, including not only the hardware, consisting of plastics and electronics, but also, for example, the owner's exclusive knowledge of the code.

A second important aspect of Foucault's definition of the dispositive is the importance of the connections between the elements. To illustrate this with the everyday example of the alarm system, if the alarm is not connected to the sensors, the system will not work. Equally, Foucault points out the potential interchangeability of the elements. The code the owner chooses for the alarm may well be the same one that in another 'dispositif' allows him or her to withdraw money from the bank.

Finally, Foucault says that a dispositive must respond to an 'urgence' which can be translated as an emergency, or a need. This also applies to the alarm system which has a highly strategic function of protecting private property in a capitalist economy that places such high value on private ownership, to the extent that a need to protect it is created.

This is not to say that an alarm system in itself represents a dispositive in terms of Foucauldian analysis (although it might be considered part of one, for example considering its function of protecting private property in a capitalist society). I introduce these ideas in order to illustrate an everyday French language notion which may have contributed to Foucault's conceptualisation of the dispositive and which may be helpful in grasping the abstract concept it became in his writings.⁴

2. Heterogeneity in the dispositive

Considering that this is a paper on linguistics, it may seem strange to be preparing to work on a definition of a unit of analysis which includes not just language but many non-linguistic elements. This is precisely the addition that dispositive theory makes to discourse theory. Whereas Foucault's work on discourse theory had focused on the statement and the archive (particularly in the *Archaeology of Knowledge*), the addition of the dispositive (from the *History of Sexuality* onwards), allowed him to begin to theorise the analysis of non-linguistic elements.

In the definition of the dispositive quoted above, Foucault addresses the question of heterogeneity as one of the defining qualities of the dispositive. He starts his definition by emphasising that a dispositive is a 'decidedly heterogeneous ensemble' (Foucault 1994 (1977): 299), and then lists possible elements of a dispositive as:

discourses, institutions, architectural structures, prescriptive decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral or philanthropic propositions, in short: words, but also what it not expressed in words. (Foucault 1994 (1977): 299)⁵

Some of the elements are textual ('du dit'), but others such as the institutions and the architecture are not ('du non-dit'), meaning that the heterogeneity is couched as a question of language versus object.

In the course of the text quoted (which takes the form of a discussion between academics) Foucault's colleagues later ask how the new term *dispositif* relates to his previous work on *epistemes*, and discursive formations, to which he replies:

In 'The Order of Things', in trying to write a history of the *episteme*, I got into an impasse. Now what I want to do is to try and show that what I call a *dispositif* is a much more general form of the *episteme*. Or rather that the *episteme* is a specifically discursive *dispositif*, compared to the *dispositif* itself which is discursive and non-discursive, its elements being much more heterogeneous. (Foucault 1994 (1977): 300-1)⁶

Foucault seems to be using the term discursive to refer to language, text, writing, and contrasting it with non-discursive items, such as institutions, architecture, and administrative measures, to take his own examples from the possible heterogeneous elements of the *dispositif*. He is suggesting that while the *episteme* was entirely language-based, the new term *dispositif* allows him to go beyond that and analyse non-linguistic elements. Later in the discussion, one of his questioners in fact suggests to him just that: 'With the *dispositif* you want to go beyond discourse', to which Foucault replies 'Ah yes!' (ibid.: 301).

It has to be said at this point that the division into discursive and non-discursive defined as language-based and non-language-based elements is in Foucault's own terms not unproblematical. Firstly, he himself frequently insisted on the fact that discourse analysis should go further than an analysis of language: In the *Archaeology of Knowledge* (written before the interview quoted and before the *History of Sexuality* where the term *dispositif* is most fully developed) he wrote that discourses were not to be treated as:

groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this more that renders them irreducible to the language (*langue*) and to speech. It is this 'more' that we must reveal and describe. (Foucault 1982: 49)

Secondly, his empirical analyses such as *Birth of the Clinic*, or *Discipline and Punish*, do indeed go much further than linguistic analyses in their study of the conditions for the creation of knowledge in the history of the human sciences. One could perhaps make the argument that Foucault's own theory lagged behind the depth of his analyses, and introducing the *dispositif* was a way of catching up with what he was already doing.

At the same time, Foucault himself admitted to not always using the term discourse consistently⁷. This sometimes rather woolly treatment of the discursive versus the non-discursive makes it difficult to determine the status of the definition of the *dispositif* as quoted above. The situation is further complicated by varying use by

Foucault and by Foucault scholars of the term ‘practice’, either as in ‘discursive versus non-discursive practice’, or as ‘practice as opposed to discourse’; adding the question of ‘discourse as language’ versus ‘practice and objects as reality’ serves to increase the potential for confusion. This has led to serious debate as to just which relationship Foucault saw between discourse and reality, which has been explored in more detail by other authors, but which I do have the scope to go into here.⁸

Coming back to the question of heterogeneity, despite the lack of clarity about Foucault’s use of some categories, the fact remains that in terms of its conceptualization, the dispositive it was intended to cover a wider variety of elements than was included in Foucault’s theoretical work in the *Archaeology of Knowledge* and the *Order of Things*. And indeed because Foucault unquestionably did analyse more than just text in his empirical works, but without making the method of that analysis explicit, the question of how to analyse elements other than text is more than justified.

2.1 Operationalising dispositive analysis via heterogeneity

To move onto the methodological concerns of how to do dispositive analysis, I will turn to the work of Siegfried Jäger. His contribution to discourse analysis has been amongst other things to operationalise Foucault. Having developed a method of discourse analysis⁹ which has been tried and tested in a large number of studies¹⁰, Jäger has more recently turned his attention to how to do dispositive analysis¹¹.

Jäger takes on board Foucault’s distinction between the linguistic and the other elements of the dispositive that Foucault lists in the definition quoted above and develops a three-way breakdown of the heterogeneity of the dispositive. According to this, the elements of the dispositive can be:

- discursive practices
- actions (non-discursive practices)
- physical objects (Jäger 2001b: 83).

Jäger goes on to relate all three categories to the question of the formation and transmission of knowledge, which Jäger essentially conceptualizes as the attribution of meaning by active subjects¹². Discursive practices, he says, are where knowledge is primarily carried.

While he counts actions as non-discursive practices, he specifies that they nevertheless transport knowledge, because knowledge is a pre-requisite for undertaking the action in the first place, and they are ‘accompanied by’ knowledge. I would like to add that they can also generate knowledge.

The third category of ‘physical objects’ requires more explanation. The original text uses the German word ‘Vergegenständlichungen’. Where a ‘Gegenstand’ is a simple physical object, by adding the prefix ‘ver’, the word contains a reference to a process of becoming that thing.¹³ So in the case of ‘Vergegenständlichung’ (which cannot be found in the dictionary), the word refers to the process of becoming that object i.e. the discursive formation of the object. Jäger adds that the object can only remain in existence as long as its supporting discursive practices and actions continue to accompany it.¹⁴ One could perhaps more closely translate ‘Vergegenständlichung’ as *materialization* or *concretization (of discourse, or knowledge)* but for the purposes of this paper I will continue to use the term ‘object’.

The advantage of this three-way categorisation is that it gives the analyst a means of access to three separate parts of the dispositive, which otherwise is a rather unapproachable composite, or a 'decidedly heterogeneous ensemble', in Foucault's own words.

The means of access to the first category, the discursive practices, is simply discourse analysis, as practiced by Foucault, and operationalised by Jäger and others.

For the second group, consisting of actions or non-discursive practices, Jäger seems to take a different tack as he imagines how to analyse them. He points out that even a simple action like going to the baker's to buy bread rolls requires a great deal of social knowledge on the part of the actor (such as the rules of the road, social conventions such as dress and the use of money, local topographical information concerning the whereabouts of a bakers). One means of access to this knowledge suggested by Jäger is to ask the person concerned what they are doing so they can attribute meanings to their actions. In this way he returns to the discursive practices, effectively verbalising or discursivising the knowledge behind the non-discursive practice. Thus here the means of access remains discourse analysis of that discursivised knowledge. It is of course essential that the answers are not taken at face value, as some kind of reified objective description of actions. They themselves are obviously part of discourse, and need to be properly analysed, along with any existing discursive practices (i.e. texts) relevant to the action under discussion.

Finally, for the third group, the 'physical objects', the means of access is not so obvious. There are no words printed on or to be squeezed out of a house, a church, or a bicycle, by engaging it in conversation, or inviting it for interview. Furthermore an object has no inherent meaning that one could objectively 'read off'. Any building I see is and remains a pile of bricks until some meaning is attributed to it by discursive processes (and describing it as a 'pile of bricks' is of course itself a discursive attribution of meaning). So how to discover this meaning? Jäger suggests turning to third party sources which undertake precisely this attribution of meaning, which can also be called paratexts¹⁵ to the objects in question. He considers consulting users of the buildings and experts, as well as statistics, maps and books about the object concerned. So we are back to discourse analysis again, as a means of analysing Jäger's third group of elements of the dispositive. Here he also notes that these sources are themselves part of discourse and dispositives of power and must be analysed as such and not taken as objective truths.¹⁶

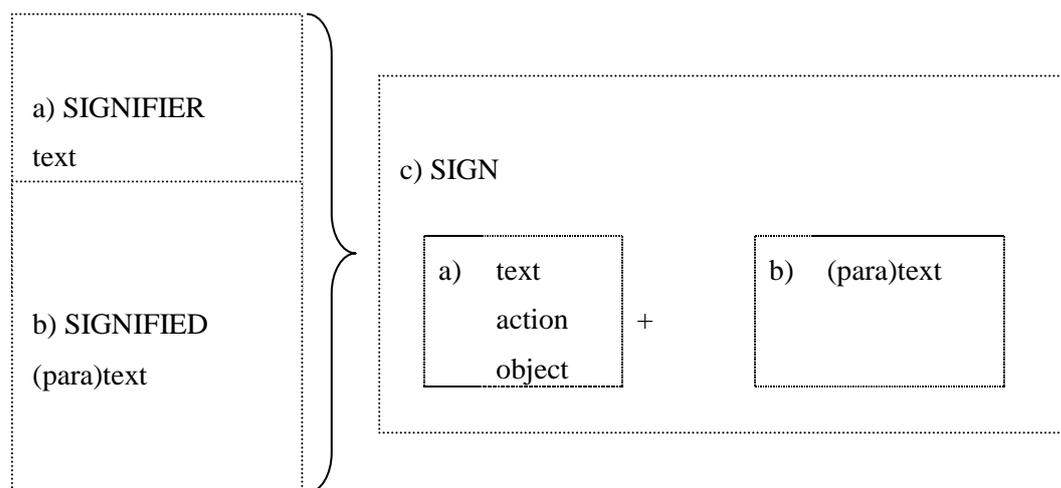
So, to summarise so far, the elements of a dispositive can be divided into three categories, but the means of analysis for all three is discourse analysis, or more specifically, the analysis of the attribution of meaning within (and across) those categories. What the categories change is whether one considers the texts being analysed as the primary object of investigation, or whether one considers the text to be a paratext to an action or an object. And what distinguishes then discourse analysis from dispositive analysis? Dispositive analysis has a broader reach and an explicit intention of analysing not just texts, but actions and objects, and crucially the links between them and the power relations that these strategically linked texts, actions and objects create.

3. *Semiology in dispositive analysis*

One could at this point argue that by always using discourse analysis, one never actually analyses the texts, actions and objects themselves, but exclusively the

meanings attributed in texts to texts, actions and objects. This distinction between the meanings and the objects put me in mind of a *semiological* approach to the analysis of discourse. In its most simple form, this could mean adopting a semiological analysis grid which divides discourse into the signifier and the signified, which together make up the sign or symbol itself. How does this apply to the dispositive? Again, keeping things simple for the time being, the three categories of texts, actions and objects become three categories of signifiers, and the meanings attributed in discourse (and discoverable in paratexts) become the signified.

Figure 1. The sign in the dispositive



To illustrate the previous point, I would now like to use some examples from my own work on architecture¹⁷. In a recent discourse analysis focusing on the treatment of German history and nationhood in newspaper articles concerning large parts of the German government and parliament moving from Bonn to Berlin following the fall of the Berlin Wall, one of the chapters concerned the new government architecture in Berlin. I was able to show that different architectural styles were used in Berlin compared to those in Bonn and that the meanings attributed to these styles were the product of a new, less self-critical attitude to German history.

So how could one apply the semiological grid to the analysis of Berlin government architecture? My original study was as follows: in the paratexts I found that certain meanings were regularly attributed to the Bonn and Berlin architectural styles, which in turn could be broken down into aspects of building which have a regular, repeated pattern of attribution of meaning. To give an example: the use of glass is an aspect of building which was regularly attributed the meaning of openness, whereas the use of stone was frequently characterised as representing remoteness. This in turn was embedded in a further cultural meaning: it was considered more democratic to be open, and less democratic to use stone.

In semiological terms then, the building material (either glass or stone) is the signifier; the meaning attributed (open democracy or remote non-democracy) is the signified. In straight semiological terms, the two together make up the sign.

3.1 The Foucauldian sign?

The advantage of introducing the semiological grid into dispositive analysis is that it provides a means of uniting the apparent distance between text or action or object (the elements of a dispositive) on the one hand, and on the other hand their meanings as

revealed in the paratexts used in order to make the elements 'speak'. Each category, whether text or action or object, can be read as a sign which in fact only exists when the integrity of its component parts of signifier and signified is recognised and realised in a specific context, rather than the meaning being separated from its object. To express this with Foucault¹⁸, the practice of attributing meaning is *not merely the designation of a thing*, but by combining the paratext and the object, *the object of which the paratext speaks is systematically formed*. To extend this yet further, I would suggest that the formation of the object is not complete without consideration of not just signifier and signified combined, but signifier and signified *and* their strategic place as an object in the dispositive, accompanied by the relevant discursive and non-discursive practices. One could perhaps refer to this as a Foucauldian sign (as opposed to a straight semiological sign).

So the term dispositive allows us to analyse objects and actions as well as text, by doing discourse analysis of the attribution of meaning in their accompanying paratexts. By doing so, we are effectively studying the formation of the objects/actions/texts in question. I have dealt so far exclusively with the first distinguishing feature of the dispositive that I mentioned (that of heterogeneity), I will now move onto the second, that of power.

4. Power and dispositive analysis

While the power issue is briefly covered in the definition of the dispositive that we have considered so far (as part of the strategic function of every dispositive in responding to a need), it has been clarified in a recent essay by Jürgen Link¹⁹. I would now like to look at Link's take on this firstly to show how this works, and secondly, as it may provide a means of approaching a method of analysis of that power dimension.

First of all, Link turns to the everyday French language definition of the 'dispositif', and draws attention to not only the concepts of dispositive as outlined above (in the sense of a group of objects set up to serve a particular strategic function), but also to the interplay of this with the French expression 'être à la *disposition* de quelqu'un', which shares the same root as the word '*dispositif*'. The phrase translates to 'to be at someone's disposal'²⁰, and Link takes from this the concept of power, in this case power over somebody's or something's fate.

He expands this with reference to the use of the term dispositive in media theories concerning film and TV, which is based on a combination of Foucault and the theorist Jean-Louis Baudry²¹, who was a student of Lacan and Althusser. In these theories, Link picks up the power element, which is divided into two fields of power. There is first what he calls an 'objective, instrumental power field' and then a 'subjective disposing power field'. He identifies the object-field in Baudry's subjectified, manipulated film-goer, sitting silently in the dark projection room, whereas the disposing side is represented by the film-maker who controls the dispositive and determines the strategy.

This is clearly still a step away from Foucault's concept of discourse, which does not permit such a one-way street of power from on high, nor the dumb passivity of a merely manipulated subject. However, in Foucault's writings, Link can trace both fields. In Foucault's own dispositive analyses, it is particularly the subjective, disposing power field that comes across as the dominant characteristic. Link provides the example of the discursive ritual of the examination from 'Discipline and Punish'

to show how the pupil or examinee is at the disposal of the 'subjective, disposing power field' within the strategy of the examination.²²

So power in the dispositive comes from the stratification between those who are at the disposal of those others who determine the strategy employed to meet a need. This form of power must of course be conceptualised in the Foucauldian way, that it is to say not simply power from those at the 'top' of, for example, a class system, but power as part of a network of relationships between different points strategically linked. But this network nevertheless involves a stratification, which may change from one dispositive to the next. For example, the judge who finds him- or herself in the 'subjective, disposing power field' as long as he or she is fulfilling functions in court, may revert to the 'objective, instrumental power field' when taking a driving test or seeing a psychotherapist, no matter what class status he or she has.

Link qualifies the addition of the power element to Foucauldian analysis in the dispositive as 'the critical innovation from the archaeology to the genealogy' (Link 2006). For the power element to work properly though, it must be combined with another key element of Foucauldian analysis: knowledge. Link sees, with reference to Luhmann, knowledge and power distributed along two intersecting axes. In this scheme, knowledge forms the horizontal axis and power makes up the vertical one. While the two axes are intrinsically independent of each other, they cannot be separated, and only make sense as a simultaneous combination of the two. Translating this into Foucauldian terms, he sees discourses (or discursive formations) as the horizontal knowledge axis. Link then goes into his own concept of interdiscourse at some length to link discourse with the vertical power axis, which time does not permit me to cover at this point.²³ Instead, I would like to quote Foucault himself, who while not explicitly using the same vertical-horizontal image, certainly confirmed the crucial link between power and knowledge in the conceptualisation of the dispositive when he said: 'That is what the dispositive is: strategies between different power relationships supporting different types of knowledge and supported by those types of knowledge' (Foucault 1994 (1977) : 300).²⁴

4.1 Operationalising dispositive analysis via the power concept

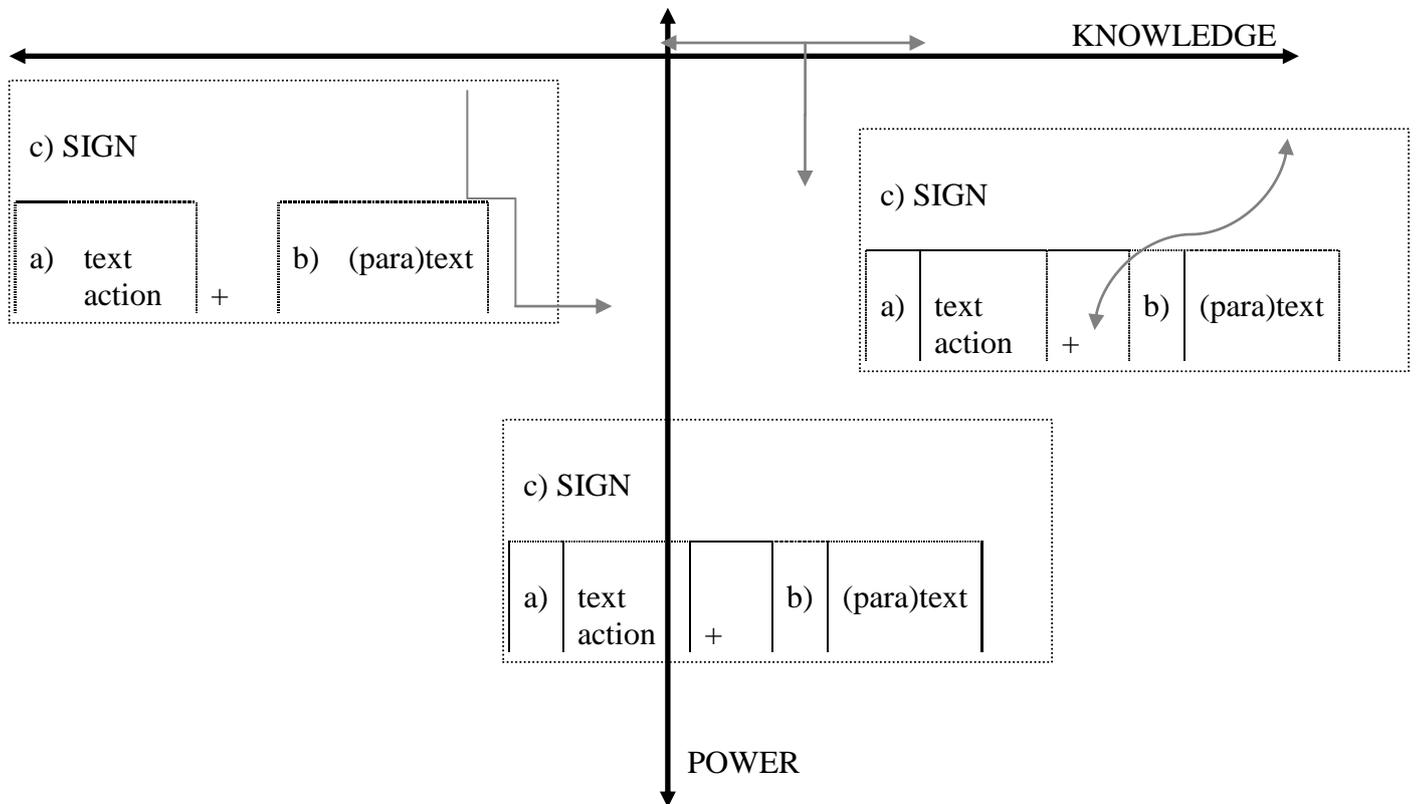
To conclude this paper, I would now like to take Jürgen Link's horizontal knowledge axis (which has been covered in the discussion of a semiological dispositive analysis so far) and the vertical power axis (which hasn't) and add it into the methodological sketch outlined above.

The discussion of the paratexts has focussed on the meanings and the knowledge carried in them. If we add in the vertical power dimension, we have to consider the source of those paratexts more closely. Link's schematic representation of knowledge and power allows us to position paratexts not only in their appropriate discursive formation (horizontally), but to place them on the vertical power scale too. We can locate them as belonging to either the disposing subject field, or to the objective instrumental field. For example, the opinions of the architects and politicians responsible for a new building would be in the disposing subject field, whereas the users of the building and any other laypeople expressing an opinion about it are more likely to be in the objective instrumental field.

The following diagram is an attempt to graphically represent most of the different theoretical aspects of the dispositive that I have tried to bring together so far to see

how a method of dispositive analysis can begin to be developed on the basis of that theory.

Figure 2. The dispositive



The signs which make up the elements of a dispositive are distributed over an axis of power and one of knowledge, connected by the various links between them specific to the dispositive in question. I have included only three signs for demonstration purposes, but in a real dispositive they could be much more numerous. The whole diagram represents the dispositive, defined by Link (2006) as ‘a specific, historically relatively stable combination’ of specific discourses in specific relationships to each other (horizontal axis) and of a specific power relationship (vertical axis)²⁵. I have tried to keep this diagram legible by not including any graphical representation of the different discourses that make up the knowledge axis nor of the different fields on the power axis, but one could imagine the whole diagram placed on a grid of discourses and power fields.

5. Initial conclusions: How to do dispositive analysis

In terms of doing dispositive analysis, this diagram guides the dispositive analyst to a three step process:

- Identify the signs or elements that make up the dispositive;
- Locate the signs on the knowledge axis i.e. determine which discourse they belong to and how this is strategically combined with other discourses;
- Place the signs or elements on the power axis by considering who or what is at the disposal of whom.

Doing these three steps means undertaking not just a semiological analysis but considering Foucauldian signs (as defined in this paper), because it includes the strategic place of the sign in the dispositive. An essential fourth step would be to consider the relevant practices associated with the signs in the dispositive. While not yet producing a comprehensive step-by-step guide to dispositive analysis, the reflections on heterogeneity and power in this paper have provided some pointers towards a methodology of dispositive analysis as a useful extension of discourse analysis.

¹ Cf. Warnke 2002: 4, and Heinemann and Viehweger 1991: 26

² Cf. Fix 2002.

³ For more detail on this definition, see below; all elements of the dispositive referred to in this section are from the same text.

This element of definition of the dispositive and the ones quoted on the following page are from Foucault 1994 (1977), my translation.

⁴ See also Link 2006 in which he considers two parts of the dictionary definition of 'dispositif' in French: firstly how the constituent parts of a device, machine or mechanism are organised (disposés); secondly the military use of the word for a group of tools and techniques which are set up (disposés) according to a plan, such as a plan of attack. The first matches my description here; the second could equally serve as an illustration, also being a heterogeneous mixture of elements connected with each other to meet a specific strategic need.

⁵ My translation; the original French text reads as follows:

'Ce que j'essaie de repérer sous ce nom, c'est, premièrement, un ensemble résolument hétérogène, comportant des discours, des institutions, des aménagements architecturaux, des décisions réglementaires, des lois, des mesures administratives, des énoncés scientifiques, des propositions philosophiques, morales, philanthropiques, bref: du dit, aussi bien que du non-dit, voilà les éléments du dispositif. Le dispositif lui-même, c'est le réseau qu'on peut établir entre ces éléments.'

⁶ My translation; the original French text reads as follows:

'Dans *Les Mots et les Choses*, en voulant faire une histoire de l'épistème, je restais dans une impasse. Maintenant, ce que je voudrais faire, c'est essayer de montrer que ce que j'appelle dispositif est un cas beaucoup plus général de l'épistème. Ou plutôt que l'épistème, c'est un dispositif spécifiquement discursif, à la différence du dispositif qui est, lui, discursif et non discursif, ses éléments étant beaucoup plus hétérogènes.'

⁷ Foucault 1982: 107

⁸ See for example Jäger 2001b, also Bublitz 1999

⁹ Jäger 2004

¹⁰ For example, Jäger et al. 1997 and Jäger and Jäger 2003.

¹¹ See for example Jäger 2001a and 2001b.

¹² See Jäger 2004: 116, also Jäger 2001b: 72-73.

¹³ Two illustrative examples of this using different words can be given: 'Krüppel' means a cripple, and 'verkrüppeln' is to become crippled. The process works with adjectives too: 'schön' means nice, or beautiful, 'verschönern' means to improve something's appearance, to make it (more) beautiful.

¹⁴ Should these practices be discontinued, the object such as the building that housed, say a bank, may still be present, but without a banking system and a society that works with it, it stops being a bank and can take on a new meaning, for example if it becomes a place where the homeless bed down. See Jäger 2001b.

¹⁵ See Caborn 2006: 155.

¹⁶ For more on Jäger's thinking on methods of dispositive analysis, see also the unpublished paper available on the DISS website (accessed 21 October 2006): http://www.diss-uisburg.de/Internetbibliothek/Artikel/Diskurs-_Diapositivanalyse.htm

¹⁷ See Caborn 2006: 155ff..

¹⁸ Here I refer back to the Foucault quote included earlier: Discourses should not be considered merely as 'groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to the language (*langue*) and to speech. It is this 'more' that we must reveal and describe.' (Foucault 1982: 49).

¹⁹ Link 2006.

²⁰ Somewhat bizarrely in current English ‘disposal’ on its own and ‘to dispose of’ have mostly come to mean to ‘throw away’, although arguably the concept of having the power to do what you please with something is still at the base of that.

²¹ Link refers for example to Baudry 1986.

²² See Foucault 1995: 184ff.

²³ For the sake of completeness, it should be added that Link defines two further key components of the dispositive, in addition to a) its strategic, disposing function, and b) the combination of knowledge and power. The remaining two are c) a combination of several discourses (which ties in well with his concept of interdiscourse), and d) a combination of discursive, practical and non-discursive practices (which relate back to the concept of heterogeneity covered extensively at the beginning of this text). See Link 2006.

²⁴ My translation; the original French text reads:

‘C’est ça le dispositif: des stratégies de rapports de forces supportant des types de savoir, et supportés par eux.’

²⁵ Link 2006.

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