Introduction: theatre, performance, Foucault

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> I would like to do a history of the *scene* on which the true was distinguished from the false, but it is not that distinction that interests me, it is the constitution of the scene and the theatre of that distinction. It is indeed the theatre of truth that I would like to write.[1]

'Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same', Foucault wrote in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.[2] Given such a statement, it might seem that the aim of this book falters before an immediate and insuperable paradox: to offer an account of Foucault's complex relationship to theatre and performance – for such a statement would appear to preclude our answering the very question the reader might reasonably expect us to address in this introduction: who exactly was Foucault and why does he matter to students of theatre? And yet, there is also something intriguingly theatrical in Foucault's statement that offers a substantial clue to the approach we take in the present volume. What it points to is the way Foucault himself was keenly aware of his own theatrical position as a public intellectual, lecturer, and writer; and that far from earnestly playing the role of public sage, he *played with* his interlocutors as though adopting a variety of theatrical personas. It is this 'theatrical' Foucault whom we hope to encounter in this book; and through his many personas, to explore the shifts and displacements of his own thought – the theatrical elisions and sleights of hand in his public engagements, as well as the staging of the various scenes of knowledge, power, and truth, which preoccupied him at different times in his books, interviews, and lecture courses. Not only does the book articulate theatre and performance in relation to Foucault's invigorating and highly inventive approach to questions of method and analysis, political and economic history, government and self-related practices,

disciplinary knowledge and truth, but it also concerns itself with what Foucault can teach us about the practice of being a thinker and public intellectual engaged with contemporary exigencies – all of this provides the rich nexus of material upon which the various contributors to this volume have set to work.

Thus, our editorial approach has been to take Foucault at his word: not to imprison him in his own discourse, or to celebrate his work as though it constituted a vast and imposing intellectual edifice – to monumentalise him – but, on the contrary, to approach Foucauldian thought as possessing, as we hope this book demonstrates, a vital and ongoing relevance for theatre and performance today. In short, if Foucault refuses the fixity of the 'author function', as is well known, he also pressingly enjoins us to engage not in biographical or hagiographical endeavours, but in another, rather more serious, task: that of critique. For Foucault, the question of critique is essential and urgent. It demands methodological play; it compels us to spar with knowledge; it challenges us to shift our standpoints on the received wisdom of our age; it requires us to question the orthodoxies of truth, even as we are inclined to take them for granted, or at face value. In a word, it is Foucault, who challenges us to engage in the most penetrating questioning of what we think we know about our world and about ourselves. And so it is with this Foucauldian question – of what constitutes 'knowledge' for us in our present circumstances, that we begin this introduction. From there we go on to consider Foucault's continuing importance for contemporary theatre and performance scholarship, followed by a consideration of the centrality of aesthetics or style in his work – style conceived as a manner of approaching, at times circumventing, discourses of power and truth. We conclude with a brief exposition of the chapters and their position within the overall organisation of the book's argument.

Why Foucault today? – the development of a critical discourse

'*Sapere Aude!*' Wake up to the perils of the present age – and have the courage to use your understanding! This was Kant's rallying cry in 1784 in an article for the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, at the cusp of the French Revolution of 1789 and at a time when power structures were consolidating themselves in new forms of statecraft. What emerged in Prussia, as elsewhere in Europe at the time, was a new kind of administrative state: Frederick II had declared himself King of Prussia, expanding the military apparatus of the state with appeal to theories of enlightened absolutism. He expanded bureaucratic procedures, effectively instituting one of the first centralised managerial states of the modern age. Concurrently, he permitted freedom of the press and instituted a range of other liberal reforms. All the same, when Kant suggested, in his article '*Was ist Aufklärung?*' ('What is Enlightenment?') that subjects may, indeed must, deploy

their reason autonomously in order to be a little bit less governed or not quite in the same way, Frederick II retorted that his subjects may 'reason all they want to as long as they obey'.[3] In effect, Kant and Frederick II were tussling over what Foucault would call 'governmentality': if Kant was suggesting a manner of being free from conditions of tyrannical rule, Frederick II deployed the apparatus of the centralised state to ensure that a citizen may think freely as long as their thinking remained congruent with the aims of state power – with government. What was being increasingly assimilated into the discourse of state power – as Foucault reminds us in his lecture course on *The Birth of Biopolitics* (1978–79) – was the theory of reason of state (*raison d'État*). In Germany, reason of state soon developed into the form of *Polizeiwissenschaft* or the science of the state. This 'science of police' should not be confused with the contemporary English usage of the word 'police', of course; what it referred to rather was the new strategic approach taken by modern forms of government. To think and govern, in other words, by means of police was to develop governmental *policy* based on abstract and 'objective' knowledge of the state and its productive resources. Government by policy was vastly enabled with the development of statistical science (literally knowledge of the state) where statistical data permitted knowledge of the population, for instance, the health of the workforce, its birth and death rates, or levels of criminality, and so on – all of which came to be organised under the remit of governmental power.

This expansion of government's field of operations covered not just the public realm but also increasingly the private spheres of everyday life that had previously been considered to fall beyond the administrative purview of state rule. Matters of security therefore become primordially significant not just in the state's deployment of bodies and various social practices – police presence, and so on – but also in the subject's internalisation of a need simultaneously to be protected (rendered secure) by the state and to experience him or herself to be, within this new form of subjection, 'free'. The paradoxical situation of modern governmentality requires, in other words, at once a feeling of relative freedom and the security of state protection, along with its obligations. Yet, as Kant recognised, and as Foucault would later pick up, the everyday salves and distractions of this state of governmentality preclude precisely the sort of self-knowledge and care of the self that might engender a genuine autonomy of the self. This is where Foucault's thinking begins to shift towards the articulation of a concern with what it means to resist governmentality in the everyday: he begins to examine what it might mean to nurture, to cultivate a self able to desubjugate itself from internalised (as well as external) structures of power. The notion of the self, however, in Foucault needs to be carefully attended to: in key respects it is quite alien to modern modes of self-conceptualisation and self-actualisation. Christopher Lasch famously described those forms of contemporary self-obsession, prevalent under contemporary conditions of consumerism, as our modern 'cultures of narcissism'.[4] In fact, when Foucault, in a debate at the Department of History at the University of California at Berkeley in April 1983, was queried on the relationship between his own concept of the care of the self (or what he described with reference to Greco-Roman practices as knowledge of self – *gnōthi seauton* – and care of the self – *epimeleia heautou*) and Lasch's notion of narcissism (understood as an attempt to escape history and evade its

responsibilities), Foucault responded that these were not only absolutely opposed but that the latter obscured the former.[5] In other words, narcissism allows one to escape oneself; whereas to embrace the possibility of cultivating a relation to oneself that is precisely not narcissistic is, for Foucault, to contemplate with simplicity and clarity a hermeneutics or knowledge of the self that is truthful. This stance towards the self, which Foucault began to evolve in the early 1980s, fundamentally challenges the Western tradition of the subject that emerged on the basis of the Christian paradigm of asceticism, by which there is a prior (sinful or 'fallen') self in need of being saved, remedied, purged, or admonished through practices of penance, mortification, and confession – and the concomitant escape from this austere cult of piety and abstinence into hedonism and narcissistic self-indulgence that is characteristic of late capitalist societies – equally a failing strategy for the desubjugation of the self.

What this entails for Foucault, in a return to Greco-Roman models, is the need to develop a renewed critical attitude, to situate the work of philosophy in a practice of life that is profoundly ethical just as it is also politically committed. What is so striking in this articulation of critique in relationship to knowledge of self and care of the self is how it enables a different sort of autonomy: not the false or superficial autonomy of consumer choices such as is offered in a liberal and (more recently) in a neoliberal paradigm (in which even the subject is constituted as a set of lifestyle choices enabling self-marketisation). Rather, this deep autonomy and culture of care articulates a relationship to self that is totally different from the culture of distractions that characterises consumerist society.

In the lecture course, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, given at the Collège de France in 1981–82, Foucault would ask: 'Is it possible to constitute, or reconstitute, an aesthetics of the self? At what cost and under what conditions?'[6] He suggests that this task cuts through customary and pervasive injunctions to '[get] back to oneself, freeing oneself, being oneself, being authentic, etcetera'[7] – modes of self-relation that are all too familiar to us today. By contrast, at the core of Foucault's call to renew the relation of self-to-self, is the problem of 'truth-telling' that emerges in the critical discourse of the teacher-friend or true counsellor – Foucault writes: '*Parrhēsia* [often translated as frank or fearless speech] is opening the heart*, the need for the two part-ners to conceal nothing of what they think from each other and to speak to each other frankly'.[8] This requires, on the part of both parties, a willingness to hear that which is not flattering; that which does not stroke or bolster their egos – their entrenched sense of self. On the one hand, the relationship of truth-telling requires a willingness to hear that which may be hurtful or upsetting; and, on the other, in offering counsel – in telling one's friend or interlocutor a truth that may be hurtful or upsetting to them – it is to be willing to take a genuine risk; within the context of the political sphere, it is to risk speaking truth to power.

What Foucault terms an 'ethics of speech' [*éthique de la parole*][9] directly addresses the problem of governmentality, outlined above: 'an ethics of self', he writes, 'may be an urgent, fundamental, and politically indispensable task, if it is true after all that there is no first or final point of resistance to political power other than in the relationship one has to oneself [*dans la rapport de soi à soi*]'.[10] And he continues:

> if we take the question of power, of political power, situating it in the more general question of governmentality understood as a strategic field of power relations in the broadest and not merely political sense of the term, if we understand by governmentality a strategic field of power relations in their mobility, transformability, and reversibility, then I do not think that reflection on this notion of governmentality can avoid passing through, theoretically and practically, the element of a subject defined by the relationship of self to self [*de soi à soi*].[11]

What this means is that the task of the cultivation of the self – or what he otherwise refers to as an aesthetics of existence – has nothing to do with the deciphering of the self as though the subject's truth were secretly concealed from it in some arcane consciousness – what he refers to as an 'exegesis of the self'.[12] It is a task that emerges rather through what he calls etho-poiesis[13] – which is 'capable of producing a change in the subject's mode of being' such that they might resist the forms of government that would otherwise dominate them.[14]

Friendship becomes, for Foucault, therefore, a critical relation of profound equality by which subjects come to know themselves in a space of trust rather than direction or conduct, as found, for example, in the Christian pastorate that he perspicuously analysed in his lectures on governmentality. By contrast, Foucault returns philosophy's first task to that of spirituality – in this case, spirituality is fundamentally opposed to theology, which would be prescriptive rather than transformative; philosophy and spirituality here are aligned instead with the constant work of accessing a non-dogmatic and critical approach to truth, now conceived as an engine for radical questioning.[15] This renders the work of philosophy methodologically identical to the project of articulating a practice of life (opposed to the Cartesian understanding of knowledge as operating on a plane separate from material and affective being). This immanent and radical politics and ethics of self leads us to claim with Foucault that while there is no escape from governmentality at present, nevertheless, there is a way through it – a manner of navigating, perhaps, inasmuch as any voyage is not without its perils[16] – that allows us all to gain simultaneously a greater lucidity about the contingency of the present (its concepts, forms of power, structures of domination, etc.) and about the manner in which we may journey without the certainty or reassurance of a predefined end. This furthermore allows us to practise every day how to be just a little bit less governed, or governed 'not quite in that way'. Judith Butler picks up on this new critical attitude in her reading of Foucault's essay 'What is Critique?' when she suggests that the task of critique is to 'pose the question of the limits of our most sure ways of knowing'.[17] What matters thus is to query ever further, not just the foundations, but the edges of our thinking; to press perpetually beyond the limits placed on our thought by 'discourses of truth'. But how do we do this? And what is the manner of performing – or inhabiting – a critical attitude such as Butler and Foucault (after Kant) enjoin us to do? What are the practices that permit this daily work of desubjugation – of philosophical life? We submit that while there is of course no simple answer to this question, the very act of questioning in this way enables us to begin – perhaps everyday anew – to shift our critical gaze.

Why Foucault? – a question for theatre and performance studies

There is arguably no better place to practice shifting one's critical gaze than in the theatre.[18] For indeed what is theatre if it is not precisely a space for 'seeing' – for rendering objects visible, so as to reconstitute them before a critical and challenging regard, to estrange them so as to see that which would otherwise be too proximate in the field of normal vision – in short, to see the familiar anew? This use of the critical gaze with respect to theatre can be found employed throughout Foucault's work. Indeed, the term 'theatre' might be thought here in at least two related methodological senses: in the first sense, it refers to what Foucault frequently refers to as a 'grid of intelligibility'[19] – a form of theatrical optics in which certain objects, truths, ideas, discourses become visible; but also, relatedly, in his use of theatre as 'metaphor', he also draws directly on theatrical examples, indicating the level of critical practices of seeing within theatre's own history. For example, in a discussion of Racine's relation to the monarchy, in his 1975–76 lecture course *'Society Must Be Defended'*, Foucault describes how classical tragedy 'recomposes what court ritual establishes … [so as to] constitute the underside of the ceremony, to show the ceremony in shreds, the moment when the sovereign, the possessor of public might, is gradually broken down into a man of passion, a man of anger, a man of vengeance, a man of love, incest, and so on'.[20] In other words, the workings of power are exposed, not in an abstract sense, but through the deployment of theatre, understood as the preeminent space for rehearsing, reflecting, and showing the critical object of analysis. Theatre is not only a cultural practice Foucault lends his attention to, through his erudite readings of ancient or early modern tragedy (see Gotman and Elden in this volume), it is also a manner of reading the nexus of relationships established by all forms of representation. Whether directed to the political or aesthetic spheres, Foucault's theatrical approach is fundamentally bound to the task of exposing the spectatorial gaze of power, or what – in relation to his famous analysis of Jeremy Bentham's panopticism – he termed the 'eye of power';[21] it is also what, in his later work, is transformed into a concern with 'play' (*jeu*) and 'roles' taken in truth-telling practices. In other words, for Foucault, the display of truth – the alethurgical practices of the parrēsiast discussed above – entail theatrical structures and languages: truth is a matter of making-visible, of manifesting itself publically. Thus we discover in Foucault two related analyses: that of power that conceals truth's fictionalisations and 'manages' its truth effects, and the *parrēsia* that exposes power at some risk to the parrēsiast. This is what characterises, among other things, Foucault's profound interest in theatre as a 'grid of intelligibility' – something that enables thinking the ways in which self and other are engaged in a constant interplay of masks. Foucault, then, we argue, is a pre-eminently theatrical thinker, whether describing himself as the 'masked philosopher', drawing on spectacle in *Discipline and Punish*, or rethinking Nietzschean tragedy in *The History of Madness*.

Of course, not only does Foucault endlessly draw on the trope of the theatre in his own work, but he is also frequently referenced in theatre and performance studies. Yet despite his profound engagement with theatre, and the interest within theatre studies with Foucault's work, surprisingly, there is no book within contemporary theatre and performance scholarship that addresses the legacy of Foucault head-on – or for that matter the extensive use in his work of theatrical tropes as such. This is surprising, not least because so many Foucauldian concepts – some already mentioned – such as truth, power, bodies, knowledge, governmentality, and genealogy, amongst many others – can be found in the work of theatre scholars – although rarely are they treated as theatrical and performative problems in themselves. This is not to say that theatre and performance scholarship has failed to take Foucault seriously. Notably, Shannon Jackson thinks with Foucault 'genealogically' in her critique of the way performance becomes reified against theatre in higher education in the United States; thus Jackson draws on Foucault in order to critique 'the "institutional genealogies" of knowledge formation [within the] modern university'.[22] Likewise, Joseph Roach thinks the 'genealogies of performance' to circumvent the many 'myths' of cultural origins in his analysis of 'Circum-Atlantic Performance' – performance that recuperates and subverts colonial histories in the wake of the transatlantic slave trade. Here, Roach endeavours – in a Foucauldian manner – to think against the singularity of the body, reading performance instead through 'the reciprocal reflections [bodies] make on one another's surfaces as they foreground their capacities for interaction'.[23] In *The Player's Passion*, Roach also applies a genealogical critique of acting paradigms, rethinking the historical interaction between physiology, acting theory, and scientific concepts of the emotional and motional body.[24] There are, of course, many other ways in which Foucault's influence can be discerned in contemporary theories of performance – from Judith Butler's early work on gender constitution, which quoted Foucault, as well as her more recent work on critique, to Mark Franko's attention to a Foucauldian hermeneutics of the subject in dance studies.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the pervasive presence of Foucault, who has shaped the contemporary critical landscape, there is as yet no research dedicated specifically to Foucault's own theatrical thinking and performative mode of address. So while Foucault's influence might be said to be ubiquitous, Foucault himself remains strangely absent from contemporary theatre and performance discourse. To be sure, aspects of his work are used expediently, almost conventionally, as an authorial citation *de rigueur* on any questions concerned with power, space, bodies, and so on. While this passing use of Foucault's name has helped to keep his work visible in the discipline, we have found that this is rarely pursued at the level of a sustained inquiry into the questions around which his work revolves. A quick survey of contemporary scholarship in theatre and performance suggests that it is obligatory to mention Foucault, but rarely to inhabit his thought: to cite and to enlist but not to engage. And, at the same time, while his work has acquired an increasingly canonical status, it also – paradoxically – has begun to appear almost passé, a relic of the failure of the poststructuralist establishment; a hangover from the time when French theory was 'in'. He is frequently cited as a foil – 'genealogical analysis by all means – but not of the Foucauldian variety!' In our post-critical climate, it is as if Foucault had not only been assimilated but

exhausted, his work reduced to vacuous catchphrases – docile bodies, discipline, punishment, and so on – less, or so it may appear, relevant to a networked world, which Foucault did not live to experience.

Nevertheless, with the recent publication of the lectures he gave at the Collège de France between 1970 and his death in 1984, an opportunity has arisen – and with it a new appetite for revisiting and challenging the old shibboleths that have come to be attached to Foucault's name. We now understand far better how incisive and prescient his thinking was in regard to the questions raised by contemporary forms of economics (particularly neoliberalism), the conditions and government of forms of life (biopolitics and governmentality), the formation of subjects within a world increasingly dominated by vast inequalities – cultural, sexual, and political (contemporary forms of subjectification). As we have been arguing, Foucault may even be *more* salient for us today, given what some call a 'post-truth' political paradigm nourished by mediatised fictions, given his problematising of the very concept of 'truth'. This is important when we consider that, for Foucault, truth is not a subjacent reality or ground that can be proven or falsified. Rather, truth appears through complex discursive and performative operations – informing the very fabric of our lives. The spaces of appearance within which a 'truth' takes effect are themselves complex structures, where contesting forces endlessly jostle for temporary hegemony. As we write this introduction, for example, the news cycle, since the US election of 2016, has come to be dominated by Donald Trump. Now, we would argue that Trump is as much the product or effect of the spaces of appearance that enable his emergence as he is the agent of a pernicious politics that seeks to determine what counts as true for contemporary American life. For us, what is interesting about Trump is the way he positions himself strategically and enunciatively by claiming to speak truth to power, through what Foucault analysed as *parrēsia* – standing up for the 'common man' against the vested interests of corporations and a discredited liberal elite. At the same time, Trump's example is one of what Foucault called bad *parrēsia* – a form of 'false truth-telling', which is dangerous, says Foucault, precisely because it 'imitates' *parrēsia*.[25] Trump's discourse is determined, moreover, by what Foucault calls modes of *alēthourgia* – the processes by which a truth appears or is made manifest. Truth is not separate from these processes, but rather emerges through them as part of a wider 'discursive formation' or 'regime of truth', with material consequences in the world – the analysis of which gives us precisely an 'ontology of ourselves' and our present. As Foucault once reported: 'what I am trying to do, is to make a diagnostic of the present, to tell what we are today'.[26] This 'philosophical journalism' – an expression he used also to characterise Kant's writing – aims to embed philosophical analysis in contemporaneity. For Foucault, there is no abstract metaphysical realm within which something like 'truth' might be located above the fray, in all its other-worldly perfection. Truth is rather deployed as a structuring mechanism in the play of scientific, governmental, juridical, and other discourses of veridiction and validation (terms Foucault uses to describe the way systems of thought determine the parameters of what is true or false, normal and normative, abnormal or pathological, etc., at a given time). And, of course, as we have been arguing, truth is also for Foucault a lived practice of critique. In short, Foucault is not concerned with determining what is true or

false, but rather with analysing how 'truth' is deployed within the social or human sciences and aesthetic fields.

This is to say that Foucault's analysis enables ways of untangling the complex theatrical ecology within which truth comes to exist as an engine of power, operating both spatially and, we might say, dramaturgically. We would argue thus that Foucault offers a better way to understand the multi-faceted workings of 'power' in a world that for all the recent talk of 'empowerment' through 'transversal' networks (following Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's analysis of *Empire* among others) still remains inescapably bound to relations of power. Rather than overcoming those relations, a Foucauldian reading would suggest that transversality itself points to the micro techniques of power, seen in its dispersal at the capillary level of everyday practices. Moreover, we would argue that, and as Foucault repeatedly insisted against the views of some of his critics, power is not to be grasped as a totalising macro structure belonging to a fictional monolithic and centralised entity called 'the state'; rather, power is diffused equally – or 'transversally' – across the whole social *topos*, in a dispersed, complex, and above-all relational play of forces: power is at once a 'productive' *force* – and thus an inevitable and inescapable factor in the shaping of every social relation – as much as it is an occasion that 'produces' or 'incites' or 'provokes' modes of resistance and forms of 'agonistic' struggle.[27]

Further, of immense relevance to theatre and performance scholarship today are Foucault's rich analyses of truth processes insofar as these reveal productive ways of thinking about everyday structures of subjectivation; of how subjects become implicated within the spaces of appearance that 'truth' enables. The present volume, then, seeks to engage in the following critical task: to remedy what we believe to be the neglect within theatre and performance studies of systematic engagement with Foucault's intellectual contribution to theatre and performance thinking, and to think directly about Foucault's legacy by locating Foucault at the centre of the narrative. In this sense, the volume marks a fundamental shift in the landscape of theatre and performance studies, which has today moved on beyond the first engagements with Foucault's thought in the late 1980s and 1990s; and it is the aspiration of the contributions that follow this introduction to map out emerging avenues of enquiry that speak to its ongoing importance. Simultaneously, the volume aims to open up lines of thinking across the wider field of Foucauldian scholarship: to contribute to ongoing perspectives a new performative analysis, revealing the fundamental place of theatre in his thought.

Lastly, and above all, in this volume we wish to heed Foucault's invitation to write a 'history of the present': to think in dramaturgical terms about our own contemporaneity ('*actualité*'). This 'ontology of the present [*du présent*], of contemporaneity [*de l'actualité*], of modernity, of ourselves' does not mean that we need exclusively be concerned with contemporary events, but rather that we may seek to understand how our own concepts of truth – and thus our capacity to exercise 'critique' in regard to their *grounds* – are bound up with the time in which we find ourselves.[28] This 'critique' of the present, moreover, is itself bound up with the past: on the one hand there is no writing of history that does not bear the imprimatur of the present and its contingent play of forces – it is precisely this concern, of how to connect the past to the present,

that motivated Foucault's shift from the earlier 'archaeological' studies to his later crit-
ical 'genealogies' – while on the other hand, there is no present that is not the product
of historical operations and aberrations (the task here being to make those critically
visible). Every 'history' written in the present is a history *of* the 'present' inasmuch
as it can be said to reveal concerns and ways of seeing that could only be articulated
as such at that particular moment.[29] This is precisely why for Foucault histories are
by definition only ever relative and partial; thus, contrary to the contentions of posi-
tivist historiography, Foucault's own historical practices, far from being dominated
by immutable 'epistemes' (underlying conditions of knowledge that determine what
can or cannot be spoken of or thought at a given moment), in fact embrace the fri-
ability of historiographic practices and historical knowledge. In the words of Hubert
L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, Foucault's genealogical methodology, as it came to be
known, entails a 'radical shift in perspective'.[30] To write the history of the present, as
they put it, is to adopt an approach that 'explicitly and self-reflectively begins with a
diagnosis of the current situation. There is an unequivocal and unabashed contem-
porary orientation'.[31]

   A return to Foucault's key premises, then, viewed among others in the light of
the publication of his lecture courses, centred around his genealogical enquiries,
discloses not the fixity of Foucault's thought, but its fluidity and fragility. If we seek to
re-examine Foucault's contribution to knowledge *in* and *of* the present, what becomes
most striking is his manner of compelling a fundamental rethinking of the way we
categorise knowledge: not as a set of facts or statements that can be aggregated as
independent 'findings', but in light of an ongoing and critical *practice* of thinking; and,
indeed, as we shall now discuss, it is a practice that is committed to thinking as a live
and theatrical act.

What Foucault? – The performativity of Foucault's own discourse

Perhaps no other philosopher has been so lauded, and at the same time treated with
such scepticism, as Foucault. Part of the blame for this may be placed at Foucault's door.
For a philosopher who was so concerned with method and methodology, he presents
any reader with a formidable challenge: not only is his thought ceaselessly inventive but
with it, he was also profoundly anti-methodological – his works continually turning in
or back on themselves, not unlike a Mobius strip; at the same time, with each turn –
a new challenge to think with and against what had gone before arises. Constantly
revising his working methods – almost as quickly as he had developed them – he left
even the most experienced reader with the difficult task of pinning down what exactly
his project was (perhaps one of the reasons why Foucault's legacy has seemed to stop
at a few overly familiar key words is that the sheer volume of his intellectual output
would overwhelm even the keenest student). Yet, of course, capturing change, the

evanescence of thought, or the almost ungraspable moment of rupture in knowledge was also the point. Inconsistencies and outright rejections of his own earlier writing were inevitably constitutive of the way he operated as an intellectual responding to the problems his own intellectual journey threw up. For Foucault, thought was essentially vital – never static. In reviewing his achievement in the introduction to *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault reflected on the 'cautious, stumbling manner of this text: at every turn it stands back, measures up what is before it, gropes towards its limits, stumbles against what it does not mean, and digs pits to mark out its own path'.[32] But nor did he exercise this constant innovation in an intellectual vacuum: his attentiveness to his critics displayed a keen interest in situating himself in the present moment.[33] He refused to stand outside history; just as he turned his gaze to ancient Greek and Roman sexuality, to the European Middle Ages, to the Enlightenment and political economy, so he was also engaged in current political debates – whether over the Iranian Revolution, or prison reform in France. Recalling Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Foucault wrote that the 'essential philosophical task' is 'never to consent to being completely comfortable with one's own presuppositions'; that in order to do this, 'one must have a distant view, but also look at what is nearby and all around oneself. […] The most fragile instant has its roots'.[34] His work, then, is characterised by a penetrating intellectual curiosity, a sense of critical restlessness, political commitment – exhibiting a perpetually searching quality – while at the same time displaying an intense rigour that would earn him the respect of notable opponents such as Jürgen Habermas and Noam Chomsky.

Paradoxically, and most troubling for some critics, particularly within the Anglo-American philosophical tradition, principally committed to scientific method, this investigative quality – that cast doubt on all claims to foundation – lent his work a rather diaphanous quality that made it both frustrating and impossible to ignore. Hayden White most notably would complain that 'according to his own theory' Foucault's discourse can only derive its authority from the 'style, that characterises it'.[35] According to White, Foucault's own discourse finds no ground in truth, fact, or verifiable assertion precisely because it rejects all such notions of ground. Foucault 'seeks a space rather than a ground' and for this reason his own discourse 'unfolds seemingly without restraint, apparently without end'.[36] Worse still, its authority derives from nothing other than its rhetoric, whose form, White claims, is catachrestical in deploying rhetorical effect in order to pervert the very order of discourse:

> Foucault's style not only displays a profusion of the various figures sanctioned by this trope, such as paradox, oxymoron, chiasmus, hysteron proteron, metalepsis, prolepsis, antonomasia, paranomasia, antephrasis, hyperbole, litotes, irony, and so on; his own discourse stands as an abuse of everything for which 'normal' or 'proper' discourse stands. It looks like history, like philosophy, like criticism, but it stands over against these discourses as ironic antithesis.[37]

One cannot help but wonder, however, whether White in displaying such an astute characterisation of Foucault's work does not entirely miss the point. It is true that Foucault demonstrates extraordinary rhetorical erudition and virtuosity; but contrary to White, we do not thereby believe it discredits the work. Rather, it performs the

very operation of *alēthourgia* that Foucault describes as a virtue of thought – that is to say, while there is nothing to ground thought (in the metaphysical sense), this does not mean that there is nothing to thought. For Foucault, thought has to be taken as an unfolding event. Writing of Gilles Deleuze's work in 'Theatrum Philosophicum', Foucault noted the 'decenterings' it performs; rather than substitute 'essence' for 'appearance', this 'reverse Platonism' proposes to break the link between both, in the event.[38] This points to Foucault's profound Nietzscheanism: that there is no hierarchy between truths – no essential and accidental characteristics; no means of dividing the elemental from the superficial – of distinguishing being from appearance. In working his prose rhetorically across a dizzying array of styles, tropes, and 'catechristical' operations, Foucault in fact does what he (at least according to Deleuze) says: 'I only ever wrote fictions'.[39] For the theatre or performance scholar, this refusal to distinguish between style and substance provides an immensely productive opportunity to think through the act of writing, no less than the act of speech, as being inherently performative. That is to say, for Foucault, there is no reality his language is not already intimately bound up with; and the image of 'reality' he gives us is that of a polyvalent scenography, an unfolding set of scenes. In an interview with Japanese theatre and literary scholar Moriaki Watanabe – reprinted in a new translation at the end of this volume – Foucault recognises that 'his books are indeed […] dramaturgies'; that his writing seeks 'a sort of intensification, of dramatisation of events'. What his work seeks to reveal is a 'play of gazes, the theatre of the world'; his 'scenes' describe the way men and women in the past staged, saw, and described themselves.[40] What we propose to call, light-heartedly, Foucault's 'theatr-o-retical' scenes are well known: the clinic, the ship of fools, *Las Meninas*, the asylum, the prison, the scene of execution, and so on. It is onto these scenes that critical thought trespasses and out of which it is constituted. His virtue, we believe, subsists in the critical appropriation and perversion of such scenes – rather than pretending to visit them with the detached transcendence of a critic or historian, able to deploy a neutral language, viewing them as if from 'no where', he aims to perform a 'small gesture that consists in displacing the gaze', making visible what is too close or too large to be seen; the process of course is endless.[41] In reading these philosophical scenes, Foucault probes his own manner of attending to the work of reading; to the stage of thought; and to its own edification. It thus necessitates that constant return to the 'self' that we explored in the first section of this introduction – a question (a 'problematization') that preoccupied him increasingly in later years: the Delphic *gnōthi seauton* ('know yourself'), translated into the Socratic *epimeleia heautou* ('care of the self'), consisted of philosophical attitudes and practices – a manner of being and acting or turning to others in the world, of tending one's gaze, techniques, and exercises for attending to oneself through meditation, and so on.[42]

Foucault is all too aware of the investments his language carries in the discourses unravelled by or through these scenes and so operates a series of distancing techniques – simultaneously mirroring and deflecting the 'object' of his analysis. His *ekphrastic* use of tableaus – most notably Velasquez's *Las Meninas* in the opening to *The Order of Things*, Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, or Magritte's *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* all force shifts in perspective – also throw the act of viewing back onto the viewer; a technique that

will be familiar to anyone with a knowledge of Bertolt Brecht, with his deployment of alienation effects designed to enable us to question our contemporary truths and to raise the possibility of their displacement. What Foucault does in addition is to refuse the notion that we may be entirely separable from those scenes within which we are ourselves players, situating the 'critic' or 'archivist' or 'genealogist' on a continuum with the language or other material he or she scrutinises. This we believe is the great political and ethical contribution of Foucault's work. Contrary to White, then, we consider that Foucault's play with surface and spaces of appearance deeply and inextricably binds us to our presents, our pasts, and our futures. Thus again, while for White, Foucault's work is seen to be inherently indifferent to the future – even nihilistic – we believe that nothing could be further from the truth: Foucault's thought – particularly in the last phase, as we have already discussed – became profoundly concerned with questions of ethics, with forms of life, and the challenges of untangling ourselves from the entrapments of history manifest in our own time, again as we have also outlined above.

Foucault was also playful: if we agree (with White) that Foucault's thought was 'catachrestical' it is precisely because it was irreverent. In an interview from 1980, he quipped, 'I'm not an analytic philosopher. No-one's perfect'.[43] More than this, Foucault was defiantly uncategorisable. This, then, is the Foucault of our volume – who should be thought as pre-eminently a 'theatrical' Foucault: like the actor, he could assume many different roles and guises, no doubt in the process frustrating many of his critics. In fact, he actively refused various demands to conform to the expectations of either the discipline (or disciplines) or the academy, while at the same time locating himself at its very heart, as a kind of provocateur: he replaced Jean Hyppolite, for example, at the Collège de France, one of the most prestigious academic positions in the country, terming himself Professor of the History of Systems of Thought (Hippolyte was chair in the History of Philosophical Thought). What Foucault's title immediately brings to the fore is also the heterodox way Foucault's thinking occupies an 'interstitial' space, between at least two distinct disciplines: history and philosophy – while conforming to the expectations of neither. Indeed, he had an antagonistic relation to both, and herein lay the problem for many of his opponents: Foucault for some is essentially a philosopher who uses history, and for others a historian who uses philosophy. This leads to a further set of controversies: for the historian is bound to be dissatisfied with the philosopher who dabbles 'amateurishly' in history; while the philosopher is likely to dismiss Foucault's philosophical claims on the grounds that a historian has no real purchase on 'ahistorical' philosophical problems.[44] This is not to say that Foucault's work stands immune from critical scrutiny.[45] However, we would suggest that these antinomies and controversies – at least in terms of rhetoric – are for the most part reductive, and have led to the aporias that have resulted in some disengagement with the depth and complexity of Foucault's work.

Therefore, what we suggest is that Foucault is neither unintelligible, overly slippery, nor a 'post-modern' French obscurantist. His commitment to challenging our presuppositions about the organisation and institutionalisation of knowledge, and the fixed boundaries that demarcate disciplinary fields, required a language that resisted easy assimilation to institutional norms. In fact, it is the very movement of thought, its

vitality, its intricacy – its openness and its lightness – that interests us from a performative point of view, insofar as it reveals Foucault as the researcher, the lecturer, and public speaker *as* performer – Foucault the 'masked philosopher'. In this volume, in fact, many of the contributors draw attention to the elusive Foucault who inhabits the margins of the more famous published works, and it is in the margins that we suggest we can find a new or at least a different Foucault. Perhaps – most surprisingly – it is a Foucault whose concerns are ever more germane to contemporary thought. These include, as Wendy Brown has shown, concerns with biopolitics, governmentality, neoliberalism, and conduct among others. Mark D. Jordan takes the lectures as an occasion to write his own 'professorial' self into the pages of his 2015 book *Convulsive Bodies: Religion and Resistance in Foucault* in which he attends to questions of embodiment, particularly the embodied life of reading and speaking, which we engage with in our everyday work. It is this performative, lecturing Foucault who motivates this book, and the many authors contributing to it.

Foucault fantasised about being unknown and about wearing a mask. In 'The Masked Philosopher', he speaks wistfully of the anonymity that the mask provides, '[o]ut of nostalgia for a time when, being quite unknown, what I said had some chance of being heard'.[46] One can see why anonymity would seem so desirable of course – for Foucault himself seems to have become a name, a sign, a function even, of the kind he associated so famously with the 'author function'. By limiting 'Foucault' to a kind of tropology of well-known catchphrases, we reduce his work precisely to an 'ideological figure' such as he suggests 'marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning'.[47] Thus, in the present volume, we take this statement both as a warning and critical injunction – aware that for Foucault, even a special issue was the sign of a 'burial';[48] instead, we hope to have presented Foucault here playfully, not as a canonical author – mobilised nominally to sanction well-entrenched ideas of an *œuvre* or corpus – but rather as a writer whose intellectual restlessness and constant invention invite us to imagine ever new nodal points in the counter-discourses emerging with his work. The chapters in this book are thus concerned with extending the themes and problematics evolved by Foucault, examining issues of truth and methodology, history and historiography, space, disciplinarity, and power, while prolonging and at times overturning long-held assumptions about 'knowledge' and 'authority' such as define the Foucault we may think we know.

Foucauldian scenes: masks that Foucault wore

The present volume is attentive to several strands of Foucault's thought, but by no means should it be read as being exhaustive – on the contrary, we hope these lines of thinking will open up other analyses of Foucault's intimate relationship with theatrical modes of thought, of interest to theatre and performance scholars, and to Foucault scholarship more broadly. The book is divided into three sections, covering – broadly stated – questions of public intellectual practices, the dramaturgies of knowledge,

and questions concerning the interplay between power, politics, and history. The first section of this book, 'Truth, Methods, Genealogies', deals with a complex of Foucauldian themes, where truth is inherently linked to the performative dispersal of the subject. In Mark D. Jordan's 'Foucault's philosophical theatres', the reader's attention is drawn to the way Foucault's writing is in itself theatrical – not inasmuch as it performs mimesis, imitating in tone or form the material it sets out to explore, but rather as an exercise in the performative practices of the self or 'arts of life'. Jordan writes: 'Theatre in Foucault is the space for writing that leads to *self*-fashioning'. Whereas Foucault's profound engagement with the work of Pierre Klossowski signalled an early 'spiralling' genre of writing attuned to Nietzschean theatricality, Foucault increasingly in his later life shifts his method and lens towards what Jordan terms 'repetitive commonplaces in archives': this 'new style', in Jordan's reading of Foucault, instantiates a move to make of history 'fiction', and so too in the latest years to '[render] as theatre the agency of minute changes'. Foucault's own concern with writing becomes an occasion to think theatrically what he had previously read as philosophical theatre in Deleuze as in Nietzsche and Klowssowski: 'style' now determines a genre of writing, just as attention to ancient practices of writing allows for the emergence of aesthetic critique. Aline Wiame furthers this line of thinking, noting that 'dramatizing' for Foucault 'is a philosophical style'. 'Foucault's writing style', she suggests, 'tries to invent a philosophical equivalent of the theatrical apparatus that "captures" an event and repeats it in order to give it all its substance'. Attentive to the way genealogical critique unfolds as a play of gazes – and to how 'history' itself is fictionalised – Wiame suggests in her chapter 'The dramas of knowledge: Foucault's genealogical theatre of truth' that his 'dramatic' style allowed Foucault to fashion a self that was performative and yet also true to the work of alethurgy or the ritual discovery of truth. Reading Foucault's relationship to theatre in the Watanabe interview (published in this volume), Wiame argues that 'Foucault develops a particular kind of writing which is not *about* theatre but which thinks *through* theatre'. For her, Foucault's genealogical method 'exaggerates, it intensifies'. As such, it highlights the 'method of dramatisation' Foucault, like Deleuze, saw in a Nietzschean 'theatrical philosophy'. Wiame argues that 'theatre, as the site of a collective *experience* that is beyond truth and falsehood, must be considered at the same time as an apparatus for a genealogical writing of philosophy and as a material practice that produces its own mode of thought' as well as 'its own complicated, non-neutral fabrication of knowledge'. Taking this line of thought on the fabrication and theatricalisation of knowledge to the site of the interview, and further thinking the relationship between writing, speech, and theatricality, Magnolia Pauker suggests that Foucault's 'interview-work' has to be taken as far more than paratextual: it should not be seen as merely a 'supplement' to his published books. On the contrary, she suggests in 'Foucault live! "A voice that still eludes the tomb of the text"', Foucault's apparently paradoxical willingness to give interviews (he notoriously refrained from revealing personal aspects of his life publicly) has to be read against the fact that he gave well over one hundred interviews, each one engaging a version of his own particular brand of self-fashioning. Simultaneously displaying his awareness of the constraints of the interview genre and the attendant expectations placed on the 'authorial voice', in his interviews Foucault practises a deliberate *détournement* of this staged position of

'authority'. For Pauker, the interviews do not just facilitate our approach to Foucault's work, then, by virtue of their at times informal and thus relatively more accessible tone; rather, they constitute 'a form of public philosophical praxis'. Kélina Gotman takes Foucault's theatrical manner of thinking to his practice of *alēthourgia*, a progressive unravelling of 'truth': oriented by an understanding of what she outlines as his self-avowedly 'anarchaeological' method – a way of doing work that is contingent and circumstantial, concerned with accident and with present givens rather than with any epistemic absolutes, she shows how his work emerges into a theatrical 'space of appearance'. In 'Foucault, Oedipus, Négritude', she demonstrates how Foucault himself in his lecture courses performed a genre of anarchaeological *alēthourgia* – what he read in the Oedipus myth as a particular sort of truth-function, a 'ritual unveiling of truth'. The ritual quality of this path towards discovery suggests a critical attention to dark spaces and to the language or discourse of 'light'. She submits that Foucault's method proceeded in this way according to a logic of poiesis, 'revealing' 'truth' through narrative juxtaposition, digressions, and asides – and that this, as she shows, coheres with Souleymane Bachir Diagne's poetic philosophy of Négritude. Foucault himself was concerned with 'magical' theatres of tyrannical power structured (among others) around Black Roman displays of truth, particularly under the emperor Septimus Severus's 'orientalising' rule. Following Diagne, Gotman argues that this genre of Négritude, which favours the rhythmic 'cut' over the straight line, suggests a philosophy as praxis of serendipity and Bergsonian intermixture: ethically, aesthetically, and politically, a co-knowledge in Diagne's terms. Engaging thus 'anarchaeologically' with Foucault's reading of the Oedipus myth, together with Foucault's dramatised scenes of Black Roman governmentality, Gotman interrogates the play of ocularism, visibility, and invisibility as a scenography of truth-telling: a dramaturgy of '"showy garbs"' – 'truths' manifest in partial statements, detours, and excursions revealing the contingencies and also the fragilities of power.

Section II is concerned with questions of dramaturgy, as seen from a Foucauldian perspective. With Mark Robson, in 'Foucault's Critical Dramaturgies', we return to the oft-noted scene of Foucault's encounter with the work of Samuel Beckett in Paris in the 1950s – a moment of historical and cultural rupture that, as Robson notes, marked many intellectuals at the time. For Robson, however, the Beckettian 'break' is more than just a historical encounter, described by Foucault, as an event occurring between a theatrical work and the philosophical thought that it influenced; it also suggests a whole theatrical – and indeed 'dramaturgical' – throughline in Foucault's approach to his own lectures and his writing. As Robson shows, Foucault's thinking is profoundly spatial, intimately bound up in dramaturgical scenes. 'Foucault's text is suffused with the language of the theatrical', he writes: 'scene, spectacle, figure, stage'. This proliferation of theatrical motifs has to be taken as indicative of a manner of thinking that *belongs to the theatrical*, concerned as it is with 'scenes of difference', in short, with a dramaturgical ethics open to alterity. Joanne Tompkins, in 'Heterotopia and the mapping of unreal spaces on stage' pursues this line of thinking on theatre's unique spatiality by reexamining the notion of heterotopia – perhaps Foucault's most often cited theatrical trope – to argue that it remains further open, as conceptual apparatus, to the still unfolding developments of 'postdramatic' theatre. Heterotopias do not merely indicate

'other' spaces, including theatre; rather, more complexly, thinking heterotopia in and with theatre allows us to understand the myriad ways spatiality comes to service social and political imaginaries in theatre and beyond. Foucault's thinking does not only allow us to think theatre, however; it also engages directly with theatrical texts. Stuart Elden in 'Foucault and Shakespeare: the theatre of madness' delves into particular dramatic texts and the philosophical dramaturgy they unfold: he demonstrates how Foucault's reading of Shakespeare in particular deeply informs his work on madness. As Foucault returns again and again to the Shakespearean scene, his own thinking can be read to wrestle with the dramatisation of madness, as well as the historical contingency of 'madness' as it comes to be deployed across periods and strategically across his own many writings. Here, we see madness appearing via the specific interest that Foucault had in Shakespeare's relationship to the figure of the monarch, and – through it – ultimately to the genealogical transformation and institutional articulation of power as such. Elden writes: 'Foucault argues that the transition from King's rule to doctors' rule is indicative of a different mode of political transformation'. It suggests a shift from the power of the sovereign to disciplinary power. Taking a fundamentally essayistic – and indeed dramaturgical – approach to the question of dramaturgy, and to what he calls 'Foucault's phantom theatre', Mischa Twitchin in 'Philosophical phantasms: "the Platonic differential" and "Zarathustra's laughter"' performs a dramaturgy of thinking that, after Deleuze, stages Nietzsche's 'reversal of Plato' and also problematises this staging. As Twitchin shows, Deleuze, like Nietzsche and like Foucault himself, aimed to move beyond a so-called mimetic relationship between subject and object, truth and its representation. Instead, 'reverse Platonism' instantiates what Foucault called a 'phantasmaphysical' regime that dissolves the mimetic order of representation. Phantasmaphysics is not just fantasy, but what Twitchin describes as 'a generator of images of and for the acting of thinking'. The question Twitchin asks is whether phantasmaphysics, as an image generator, might enable us to move beyond problems of representation – beyond the metaphysics of truth. As Twitchin suggests, what is in question is whether 'appearances [are] no longer defined by an opposition to truth'; rather, appearances participate in a cinematic world of montage in which truth is partial: part-fiction, part-fantasy, and, as such, dramatically unstable.

   In the final section of the book, Foucault's concern with governmentality and power take centre stage. For Steve Potter, in 'Cage and Foucault: musical timekeeping and the security state', it is Foucault's interest in security – understood as the shift from a concern for the discipline of individual bodies to the government of entire populations – that provides a productive way of analysing the 'conductorless' works of John Cage. Whereas Cage has been understood alternatively as anarchic in his refusal to determine every note on the page or every position in space to be taken up by a performer, on the one hand; and as 'liberal', on the other, inasmuch as he nevertheless does regulate the conditions for the performance, Potter argues that Cage instead may be seen to announce a regime of securitisation. What this means is that Cage creates work that gives the greatest possible latitude to the performer – an essential aspect of Foucault's notion of security. The work is thus 'earthquake-proof', as Potter notes, following Cage. It can withstand risk; it is not disciplinary, in that it does not control ever-smaller increments of time, but instead opens these up through 'time-bracket'

structures that are 'ductile – they can undergo significant plastic deformation before rupturing'. In a previous work, John Coltrane's free jazz improvisations provided Tracey Nicholls with an occasion to think Foucault's notion of the 'author function' against the grain of its critical function. Nicholls returns in 'Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: reassessed' to her earlier argument to reconceptualise the way Foucault's work may be thought in 'a more cross-culturally careful' way. As she suggests, reading his involvement with the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Foucault presents a political ambivalence that is powerfully, 'intellectually generative': he appears as 'a political philosopher with a radical focus on human agency'. Thus, whereas he initially became interested in a sort of 'political spirituality' – an alternative to the secular, liberal, democratic West and was chastised for failing to see how this movement would lead to repression – what is most important in the lessons to be learned from the debacles that followed Iran's revolution is the way he queried orthodoxy as such. Foucault's intellectual journey through the Iranian Revolution thus becomes for Nicholls a means of appreciating anew his passionate political commitment – one that retains, as she argues, great relevance for contemporary feminist thinking.

Foucault's interest in history and historiographical practices is, of course, essential to the development of his genealogical methodology, and the final two chapters of the volume extend Foucault's critical historiography to theatre history. Dan Rebellato's 'Sightlines: Foucault and Naturalist theatre' begins by pointing out that Foucault himself gave a lecture course on modern theatre in the 1950s, with a specific focus on Naturalist theatres; and within five years had published *The Birth of the Clinic*. Rebellato shows, through his own forensic reading of the latter, the invaluable contribution Foucault makes to the analysis of Naturalism, with the emergence of the clinical gaze – of immense relevance to the Naturalist theatre of the late nineteenth century. Just as the patient's body becomes a text without a subtext, so too, Rebellato argues, 'Naturalist theatre … [places] onstage everything that would previously have been hidden, inferred, alluded to, or offstage'. This process of 'detheatricalisation' is not without contradiction though, as Rebellato reveals, for 'Naturalism constitutes the secret in order to abolish it'. With the final chapter of the volume, we move from Naturalist theatre to melodrama. Tony Fisher's 'Theatre of poverty: Popular illegalism on the nineteenth century stage' maps a specific theatrical form he designates the 'poor play' against a discursive analysis of nineteenth-century political economy which – he argues – constituted a 'general theatre of poverty', prescribing the ways in which the poor were to be made visible. Fisher's analysis shows how the climate set by economic discourse led to the emergence of the 'poor play', in which theatre staged what Foucault called 'popular illegalisms' (socially proscribed forms of conduct and behaviour, ranging from criminality to delinquency, associated with the popular classes). In doing so, he shows how this political, economic, cultural, and theatrical genealogy – essential to early liberalism – developed both a punitive relationship with poverty, and a mythography within which the poor were articulated or 'staged' enunciatively as an object of discourse. Fisher concludes by showing how this Foucauldian approach to theatre history can usefully be deployed as a means of problematising present political reality. At the end of his chapter, he asks: how are we to understand our present moment in terms of the discursive structures that enable us to view poverty today?

What is the moral tenor of our beleaguered welfare state, and how does this have its roots in what Foucault saw as a 'society of moralisation'? As Fisher suggests, 'we can hardly claim to have escaped the matrices of moralizing discourse, or the effects of the punitive society'.

At the end of the volume, we include a new translation of Foucault's 1978 interview with Moriaki Watanabe, 'The philosophical scene' ('*La scène de la philosophie*'), in which Foucault articulates his conception of his work as a scenography, a play of the gaze, and as a dramaturgy. As Foucault writes, the whole of his work can be seen as an attempt to write the scene on which truth and falsity have been constituted; but, as he notes, it is not that distinction that interests him, so much as the constitution of that scene and that theatre. 'It is the theatre of truth that I would like to describe', he writes. Ann Pellegrini masterfully sums up the work of this volume, attending to the centrality of the pedagogical scene in Foucault's work and enjoining us all to bring Foucault's radical pedagogy back into the classroom today. This aptly sums up the work that we have undertaken in this volume – an exploration of the manifold ways Foucault's work is at once theatrical, dramaturgical, performative, and concerned fundamentally with the scenographies of power, truth, and knowledge (*savoir*). Thus, while this trio of terms has been frequently examined from various angles, from philosophy to sociology, what we aim to do here is draw attention to the vectors of sight – the gazes and the performances – by which these discourses come to appear. These forms of visibilisation are, then, inherently theatrical: and Foucault's work, we therefore contend in this volume, must be read in this light. For Foucault, power, truth, and knowledge are always rendered theatrically, or they are not rendered at all: to see their dramaturgy – understanding 'dramaturgy' here as an analytical and an aesthetic endeavour – is thus to subject the present to what he called, in the interview published here, a diagnostic critique).

Notes

1 Michel Foucault, 'La scène de la philosophie', interview with M. Watanabe, 22 April 1978, *Sekai* (July 1978), 312–32; reprinted in Daniel Defert and François Ewald with Jacques Lagrange (eds), *Dits et écrits 1954–1988*, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2001), 2 (1976–88): pp. 571–95 (p. 572).

2 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), p. 17.

3 Michel Foucault, 'What is Critique?', in Sylvère Lotringer (ed.), *The Politics of Truth*, trans. Lysa Hochroth and Catherine Porter (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1997/2007), pp. 41–81 (p. 49).

4 Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: Norton, 1991).

5 Michel Foucault, 'Qu'est-ce que la critique?', in Henri-Paul Fruchard and Daniele Lorenzini (eds), *Qu'est-ce que la critique? Suivi de La culture de soi*, (Paris: Vrin, 2015), pp. 33–80, p. 120 (our translation).

6 Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject, Lectures at the Collège de France 1981–1982*, ed. Frédéric Gros, gen. eds. François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana, English series ed. Arnold I. Davidson, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 251.

7 Ibid.

 8 Ibid., p. 137.

 9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., p. 252.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., p. 238.

13 Ibid., p. 237.

14 Ibid., p. 238.

15 Ibid., pp. 26–7.

16 Ibid., p. 248.

17 Judith Butler, 'What is Critique?', http://eipcp.net/transversal/0806/butler/en, accessed 28 February 2018

18 Film scholars might argue otherwise, of course, and no doubt filmmakers such as Jean-Luc Godard or Jean-Marie Straub did precisely enact a critical shift in the cinematic gaze in the 1960s and 1970s; however, we would contend that the particular sort of gaze enabled by thinking theatre as a spatial and temporal practice that is coterminous with the event of viewing enables specific sorts of engagement with the notion of critique. We hope that this conversation will open up further exchanges between Foucault scholarship and critical writing across theatre, performance, film, dance, and other fields. On film, see the wonderful collection of Foucault's own writings on film in Patrice Maniglier and Dork Zabunyan (eds), *Foucault at the Movies*, trans. Clare O'Farrell (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

19 A term that can be found throughout Foucault's work. For a useful discussion of this term, see Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Herefordshire: Pearson Education, 1982), p. 121.

20 Michel Foucault, *'Society Must Be Defended': Lectures at the Collège de France 1975–76*, ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, gen. eds. François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana, English series ed. Arnold I. Davidson, trans. David Macey (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 176.

21 Michel Foucault, 'The Eye of Power', in Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977* (Essex: Pearson Education, 1980), pp. 146–65.

22 Shannon Jackson, *Professing Performance: Theatre in the Academy from Philology to Performativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 5.

23 Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 25.

24 Joseph Roach, *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Minneapolis: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

25 Michel Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982–83*, ed. Frédéric Gros, gen. eds. François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana, English series ed. Arnold I. Davidson, trans. Graham Burchell (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 182.

26 Foucault, 'Qui êtes-vous professeur Foucault?' in *Dits et Ecrits*, 1: pp. 629–48 (p. 634).

27 See for example Alan Read's use of Michel de Certeau in *Theatre and Everyday Life*, which borrows de Certeau's notion that Foucault develops a totalising vision of power in the manner of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus: '[French cultural theory] in the hands of Lefebvre and de Certeau is alternative in the sense that their work resists the "panopticon" procedures and conclusions of Michel Foucault whose discourse analysis emphasised the all-pervasive influence of power over agents'. Alan Read, *Theatre and Everyday Life: An Ethics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 100. In 'The Subject and Power' Foucault would argue: 'The power relationship and freedom's refusal to submit cannot therefore be separated. The crucial problem of power is not that of voluntary servitude (how could we seek to be slaves?). At the very heart of the power relationship, and constantly provoking it, are the recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom'. Michel Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', in James D. Faubion (ed.), *Power*, Vol. 3, *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, trans. Robert Hurley and others, 3 vols. (New York: New York Press, 2001), pp. 326–64 (p. 342).

28 Daniele Lorenzini and Arnold I. Davidson, 'Introduction', in Foucault, *Qu'est-ce que la critique?*, pp. 11–30 (pp. 22–3).

29 This is in contrast to Gayatri Spivak's use of Foucault's notion of 'historical sense' which she describes as being 'much like a newscaster's persistently revised daily bulletin'. Spivak quoted in Jane Gallop, *The Deaths of the Author: Reading and Writing in Time* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 123.

30 Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, p. 109.

31 Ibid., p. 119.

32 Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 17.

33 See for an interesting discussion of Foucault's openness to engage with his critics, Knox Peden, 'Foucault and the Subject of Method', in Peter Hallward and Knox Peden (eds), *Concept and Form. Volume Two: Interviews and Essays on the Cahiers pour l'Analyse* (London: Verso, 2012), pp. 69–88.

34 Michel Foucault, 'For an Ethic of Discomfort', in Faubion (ed.), *Power*, pp. 443–8 (p. 448).

35 Hayden White, 'Foucault's Discourse: The Historiography of Anti-Humanism', in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), pp. 104–41 (p. 114).

36 Ibid., p. 108.

37 Ibid., p. 115.

38 Michel Foucault, 'Theatrum Philosophicum', in James D. Faubion (ed.), *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, Vol. 2, *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, trans. Robert Hurley and others, 3 vols. (London and New York: Penguin and The New Press, 1998), pp. 343–68 (p. 343).

39 Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (Paris: Les éditions de minuit, 2004 [1986]), p. 128.

40 Foucault, 'La scène de la philosophie', pp. 571–2, 574.

41 Ibid., p. 594.

42 Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*.

43 Foucault said this at the Howison lecture he gave at the University of Berkeley in 1980. See *Open Culture*, www.openculture.com/2013/12/michel-foucault-delivers-his-lecture-on-truth-and-subjectivity.html, accessed 12 October 2016.

44 Beatrice Han argued that Foucault should be seen as a philosopher in the transcendental tradition of Kant, while Gary Gutting argued that Foucault should primarily be seen as a historian. See Gary Gutting's review of Han's *Foucault's Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical*, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews,* May 2003, http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/23402-foucault-s-critical-project/, accessed 24 October 2016.

45 For an excellent critique of Foucault's use of the historical *apriori*, see Beatrice Han's *Foucault's Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical*, trans. Edward Pile (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

46 Michel Foucault, 'The Masked Philosopher', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *Ethics*, Vol. 1, *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, trans. Robert Hurley and others, 3 vols (New York: New Press, 1997), pp. 321–8 (p. 321).

47 Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author', in Faubion (ed.), *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, pp. 205–22 (p. 222).

48 Foucault, 'La scène de la philosophie', p. 572.