The Strange Reception of Foucault’s Political Philosophy

Paul Patton
University of New South Wales

With the benefit of the complete publication of Foucault’s lectures at the Collège de France, the reception of his work by political philosophers in the English speaking world during the late 1970s and early 1980s appears extremely confused. That reception was based on the English translations of work published in the mid 1970s, chiefly *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, as well as interviews from the same period; and complicated by ignorance of developments in his approaches to politics and power worked out in lectures from 1976 to 1979. The aim of this talk is not simply to defend Foucault against critics from that period, but to show how a more complete understanding of the evolution of his political thought might enable a different and more productive encounter between his genealogical approach to power and government and the concerns of analytic political philosophy.

Paul Patton is Scientia Professor and Professor of Philosophy at the University of New South Wales. He has published widely on French poststructuralist approaches to political philosophy, including the work of Deleuze, Derrida and Foucault, as well as on political liberalism, rights and the rights of indigenous people. He is author of *Deleuzian Concepts: Philosophy, Colonization, Politics* (Stanford), translator of *Deleuze, Difference and Repetition* (Columbia), and co-editor (with John Protevi) of *Between Deleuze and Derrida* (Continuum).