Encountering Foucault in lifelong learning
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> *"The only important problem is what happens on the ground."*
> (Foucault 1991a, p.83)

The chapters in this book stage a range of different encounters with the work of Michel Foucault. Through them we not only gain a better understanding of the potential of Foucault's work. At the same time the chapters shed a different light on policies and practices of lifelong learning. There is, therefore, a double encounter in this book: we encounter Foucault in lifelong learning and we encounter lifelong learning through the eyes of Foucault. Both encounters are, of course, important. Whereas the stated purpose of this book is to gain a new and different understanding of lifelong learning and, through this, to contribute to a re-conceptualisation of lifelong learning, the book also functions as a 'test' of Foucault's ideas. It reveals strengths and weaknesses of using Foucault to analyse and understand educational practices and processes and the wider strategies and techniques of governing in late-modern, neo-liberal societies. For this final chapter this raises two questions: What has this book achieved in understanding and conceptualising lifelong learning differently? And what does this tell us about the significance of Foucault's work for this particular endeavour? To address these questions I will, in this final chapter, focus on three issues: (1) the nature of Foucauldian analysis; (2) the question of normativity; and (3) the opportunities for change. In what follows I will first try to characterise the main thrust of the chapters against the background of Foucault's ideas on governmentality and power. I will then focus on what I see as one of the most interesting dimensions of this book, viz., the question as to what follows from Foucauldian analysis. I will first characterise how the different authors answer this question. I will then discuss what I see as the specific 'nature' of Foucauldian analysis, particularly with respect to the relationship between power and knowledge. This will provide the background for my reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the contributions in this book which, finally, will bring me back to the question of normativity in Foucauldian analysis and the question as to how such analysis can support change.

The Governmentality of Lifelong Learning
What unites the chapters in this book is that they all analyse policies and practices of lifelong learning with reference to the idea of 'governmentality.' 'Governmentality' – a neologism introduced by Foucault to refer to 'governmental rationality' (see Gordon 1999, p.1; Foucault 1991b) – refers "to the structures of power by which conduct is organised, and by which governance is aligned with the self-organising capacities of individual subjects" (Olssen this volume, p.1[ms]). What Foucault was after with the idea of governmentality was an understanding of practices of governing – and more generally an understanding of the 'exercise' of power – which was not based on the idea of power as coercion or violence. Foucault argued that we should see power as a relationship, but not simply as "a relationship between partners," but rather as "a way in which certain actions modify others" (Foucault 1982, p.219).

> In effect, what defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of
> action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead it

> acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future. (ibid., p.220)

A relationship of violence "forces, it bends, it breaks on the wheel, it destroys, or it closes the door on all possibilities" (ibid.). A power relationship, on the other hand, "can only be articulated on the basis of two elements which are indispensable," namely that the one over whom power is exercised "be thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts" and that, "faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible interventions may open up" (ibid.). To govern, therefore, means "to structure the possible field of action of others" (ibid., p.221) which, in turn, implies that power as a mode of action upon the actions of others does not do away with freedom but rather presupposes it. "Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free." (ibid.)

This way of understanding power allows for a new kind of analysis of practices of governing, an analysis which does not simply look at the activities of those 'in power' and the ways in which they force others into particular actions, but which rather focuses on the ways in which power 'circulates' in relationships and social networks and on how the circulation of power is the *result* of what free subjects do to others and to themselves, not its precondition. This is why Foucault emphasised that the analysis of power relations within a society "cannot be reduced to the study of a series of institutions, not even to the study of all those institutions which would merit the name 'political'" (ibid., p.224). The reason for this is that power relations "are rooted in the system of social networks" (ibid.). This means that we shouldn't simply look for those who 'steer' those networks; it is rather that a particular configuration puts some in the steering position or gives the impression that some are 'in control.' The actual workings of power are thus quite messy. As Foucault put it: "The forms and the specific situations of the government of men by one another in a given society are multiple; they are superimposed, they cross, impose their own limits, sometimes cancel one another out, sometimes reinforce one another." (ibid.) This is not to say that the state is no longer important or no longer powerful. But this is not because power in some original form belongs to the state, but "because power relations have come more and more under state control (although this state control has not taken the same form in pedagogical, judicial, economic, or family systems)" (ibid.). This is what Foucault referred to as the *governmentalization* of the state (see Foucault 1991b, p.103; see also the contribution by Simons and Masschelein in this volume).

Whereas the analysis of power and of practices of governing plays a crucial role in Foucault's work, he has made it clear that ultimately "it is not power, but the subject, which is the general theme of my research" (Foucault 1982, p.209; see also Biesta 1998a). For Foucault, the point is not simply to find an answer to the question how power is exercised and what happens when individuals exert power over others and over themselves. Foucault seeks to answer these questions because he wants to understand how particular subjectivities, particular ways of being, are 'produced' through these processes and, also, how other subjectivities and identities are made difficult or impossible. Whereas in his earlier analyses Foucault explored this through the examination of disciplinary power and pastoral power, governmentality, as Nicoll and Fejes make clear in the introduction, combines the two perspectives in the study of the rationality of governing, thus foregrounding the *active* contributions individuals make to the circulation of power relationships and have to make in order for particular

modes of governing to become possible. As Edwards in his chapter explains, governing "does not so much *determine* people's subjectivities, but rather elicits, fosters, promotes and attributes [them]" (Edwards, this volume, p.5[ms]). Or, in the words of Dean: "to analyze government is to analyze those practices that try and shape, sculpt, mobilize and work through the choices, desires, aspirations, needs, wants and lifestyles of individuals and groups" (Dean 1999, p.12). This line of thought is particularly prominent in the Foucauldian analysis of the governmental rationality of neo-liberalism in which the self is configured as an 'entrepreneurial self' or an 'entrepreneur of the self.' The entrepreneurial self, as we can read in the chapter by Simons and Masschelein, is not simply – or perhaps we should say: not only – a free subject; the entrepreneurial self is also a *governable* subject, that is, a subject that is of "strategic importance for advanced liberal governments" (Simons & Masschelein, this volume, p.7[ms]).

Against this background it is now possible to characterise the contributions in this book in a more precise manner. What all the authors in their own way show is that lifelong learning is not a 'natural' phenomenon that exists outside of the circulation of power and beyond the influence of neo-liberal governmentality, but that it is rather closely tied up with the neo-liberal governmentality. The chapters show the different ways in which the field of action of lifelong learning is structured. The point of making this visible is not only to show "the structures of power by which conduct is organised" (Olssen, this volume); it is also to reveal the ways in which "governance is aligned with the self-organising capacities of individual subjects" (ibid.). The chapters show, in other words, that the governmentality of lifelong learning as it manifests itself in contemporary neo-liberal societies, calls forth a particular *kind* of subjectivity called the 'lifelong learner.' Lifelong learners are not only *condemned*, so we might say, to a never-ending life of learning. Under the neo-liberal governmentality of lifelong learning, lifelong learners have also become increasingly *responsible* for their own learning. The chapters thus show how the neo-liberal governmentality of lifelong learning has turned learning from a right into a duty (see Biesta 2006). This reveals that the neo-liberal governmentality of lifelong learning is bound up with particular power relationships and particular ways of being, and it is in this 'assemblage' that we can find what Simons and Masschelein refer to as the *governmentalization* of learning itself.

The Consequences of Foucault
Whereas most of the chapters in this book follow a similar – though definitely not identical – pattern in their *analyses* of the governmentality of lifelong learning, the *conclusions* they draw from their analyses are quite different. Olssen suggests, for example, that a Foucauldian analysis should be complemented with a *normative* argument which would allow us to 'safeguard learning from neoliberal appropriation.' He argues for a democratic conception of lifelong learning and suggests that in order to bring this about we need "a theory of learning that teaches how powers are formed, harnessed and sustained, how compositions are brought into being, or avoided, how encounters are influenced and how institutional and collective politics are negotiated productively" (Olssen, this volume, p.9[ms]). Edwards takes a more 'modest' approach, highlighting the fact that "attempts to mobilize lifelong learning in particular ways" will never be 'perfect' since they will always be subject "to diverse and unexpected shifts and changes" (Edwards, this volume, p.10[ms]). But he also calls for a more active decentering of the 'regime of truth' of lifelong learning "in

order that we can look again at the meanings it has, and the work it does" (ibid.). Simons and Masschelein take, in a sense, a more radical approach in that they argue for the need to reject learning altogether – 'freeing ourselves from learning' as they call it. Their reason for this is that as long as we try to 'improve' learning itself we remain caught up in the "current governmental regime" of which learning is part (Simons & Masschelein, this volume, p.10[ms]).

Whereas the aforementioned authors draw explicit implications and recommendations from their analyses, Olsson and Petersson seem to refrain from doing so. They present their analysis without drawing any conclusions from it and seem to want to leave it to the reader to do this. Popkewitz is slightly more explicit about the way in which his analyses might be used in that he argues that a historicizing analysis as the one he provides in his chapter might help to 'unthink' particular fixed oppositions and thus might lead to different ways of thinking and being. Fejes takes a similar approach in his attempt to historicize the figure of the lifelong learner, but draws more explicit conclusions from his analysis by arguing that different 'configurations' of the lifelong learner all result in particular exclusions, sometimes even in the name of inclusion. He summons his readers to "question the narratives of lifelong learning and [to] try to understand what kinds of subjects are intended as the product" (Fejes, this volume, p.10[ms]). Fogde's detailed analysis of the ways in which contemporary job search practices 'regulate' the subject in a particular way again remains on the side of analysis, without drawing any specific lessons. Like Edwards, Zackrisson and Assarsson emphasise the fact that the workings of power are never perfect. Participants in adult education use such education in ways that fit their own patterns of life, which makes it difficult to understand these processes as a one-sided exertion of power. They suggest that it is always possible "to act defiantly" (Zackrisson &Assarsson, this volume, p.8[ms]). Their optimistic conclusion therefore is that "the normalizing techniques of power not only produce obedient and predictable people but also revolutionary and unpredictable [ones]" (ibid.).

The more descriptive analysis provided by Anderson, another example of an author whose analysis does not lead to any specific conclusions or recommendations, stands in stark contracts to the way in which Berglund draws conclusions from her research. Like Simons and Masschelein she is acutely aware of the fact that the 'freedom of choice' that can be found in the neo-liberal governmentality of lifelong learning is part and parcel of this governmentality and should therefore not simply be seen as a point from which resistance can emerge. As long as subjects do not become aware of the ways in which power/knowledge operates through these practices, they will be fooled into believing "that this freedom of choice opens up all subject positions equally" (Berglund, this volume, p.13[ms]). It thus "may mislead people to think that any life choice may be an equally possible and desired subject position" (ibid.). Berglund thus seems to suggest that an understanding of the workings of the neo-liberal governmentality of lifelong learning might be a way to overcome or counter some of its power-effects. This way of thinking can also be found in Ahl's contribution as she argues that the kind of analysis that she has conducted makes it possible to question what is considered to be normal and what is considered to be deviant. In this way, Ahl suggests, it can support the resistance of those who, from the dominant or 'normal' perspective appear as a problem. Nichol does something similar in her analysis of e-learning, in that she presents different ways to understand e-learning and its implications for disciplines and subjectivities. Her conclusion is that

e-learning in itself does not determine a particular 'use.' Therefore, whether it will lead to more discipline or more freedom crucially depends on the uptake. The analysis itself can be seen as making readers – including those who use e-learning – aware of these different options. Solomon's discussion, the last one in the row, shares most with those chapters which aim to analyse the neo-liberal governmentality without articulating any specific lessons or drawing any specific conclusions.

When we look at the chapters in this way, that is, by focusing on the conclusions and recommendations that the authors draw from their analysis, we can roughly discern three different approaches. Some authors just present an analysis of policies and practices of lifelong learning, highlighting, for example, how such policies and practices call forth particular subjectivities and create particular subject positions, but they leave it to their readers to draw any conclusions from this. Others are more explicit in their conclusions and suggest more or less explicitly that Foucauldian analysis can help us to unveil the workings of power and that it is because of this can such analysis can help individuals to be less determined by power. They emphasise, in other words, the emancipatory potential of Foucault. A third group of authors is more reluctant to 'translate' their analyses into recommendations for action because they seem to acknowledge that Foucauldian analysis has implications for the very practice of analysis itself as well. (This is what Nicoll in her chapter refers to as the 'reflexive difficulty'.) I am inclined to agree with the third group of authors because in my view Foucault has not only provided us with a different way to analyse power and governing; his work also implies a different understanding of what the analysis of power itself can achieve. This has everything to do with the way in which we understand the relationship between power and knowledge. 'After' Foucault, so I wish to suggest, we have to understand this relationship in a fundamentally different way than 'before' Foucault, and this has important implications for what Foucauldian analysis can achieve and how it might be utilised to effect change. In order to appreciate what the difference is that makes this difference, I need to say a little more about Foucault and (the) Enlightenment.

Stop Making Sense? The Question of Method
Many would argue that Foucault has helped us to understand the workings of power in a new and different way. At one level this is, of course, correct. But what complicates the matter is that for Foucault a better understanding of the workings of power does not automatically put us in a position where we can free ourselves from the impact of the workings of power. Foucault has explicitly rejected the idea that we can use knowledge to 'combat' power. He has rejected the Manichean foundations of the Enlightenment in that he has challenged the idea that power and knowledge are separate 'entities' and that emancipation consists in the 'victory' of knowledge over power (see Pels 1992). For Foucault power and knowledge always come together – something which is expressed in his notion of 'power/knowledge'. This is why he has argued that we should abandon "a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can only exist where the power relations are suspended" (Foucault 1975, p.27). This is not to say that change is no longer possible or that knowledge has become futile. But what it does signify is the end of the 'innocence' of knowledge, the end of the idea that knowledge is 'pure', 'simple' and uncontaminated by power and thus can be used to reveal how power operates. Foucault urges us to acknowledge that we are always operating *within* fields of power/knowledge – of power/knowledge against power/knowledge, not of power against knowledge or knowledge against

power. What is 'new,' therefore, about Foucault's analysis of power – and hence should be taken into consideration in any Foucauldian analysis – is that he does not see this analysis as the way in which we can escape and overcome the workings of power (see also Biesta 1998b).

Does this mean that for Foucault we live in an iron cage from which no escape is possible? Is it the case, as some of Foucault's critics have argued, that his work has an "anaesthetizing effect" because the "implacable logic" of it leaves "no possible room for initiative" (Foucault 1991a, p.82)? These questions only make sense as long as we assume that it is possible to occupy a place outside of the system from which we can analyse and criticize the system. They only make sense, in other words, as long as we assume that knowledge is 'outside' of or 'beyond' power. But what Foucault has urged us to do, is precisely to move beyond this inside-outside thinking. There is, therefore, potential for action, change and critique in Foucault's 'universe,' but it requires an approach that is distinctively different from the modern Enlightenment approach. According to Foucault it is true "that we have to give up hope of ever acceding to a point of view that could give us access to any complete and definitive knowledge of what may constitute our historical limits" (Foucault 1984, p.47). But this doesn't mean that there is nothing to do. Foucault agrees with Enlightenment thinkers such as Kant that criticism "consists of analyzing and reflecting upon limits" (Foucault 1984, p.45). But "if the Kantian question was that of knowing what limits knowledge had to renounce transgressing, (…) the critical question today has to be turned back into a positive one: in what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints? (Foucault 1984, p.45)

In some of his work Foucault has referred to this approach as 'eventalization' (see Foucault 1991a, p.76). Eventalization comes down to a 'breach of self-evidence.' "It means making visible a singularity at places where there is a temptation to invoke a historical constant, an immediate anthropological trait, or an obviousness which imposes itself uniformly on all." (ibid.). Rather than looking for a single explanation of particular 'facts' or 'events,' eventalization works "by constructing around the singular event ... a 'polygon' or rather a 'polyhedron' of intelligibility, the number of whose faces is not given in advance and can never properly be taken as finite" (ibid., p.77). Eventalization thus means to complicate and to pluralize our understanding of events, their elements, their relations and their domains of reference (see ibid.). Looked at it in this way, eventalization does, therefore, not result in a 'deeper' understanding, an understanding of underlying 'structures' or 'causes' and in this respect eventalization does not generate the kind of knowledge that will set us free from the workings of those structures or causes. But Foucault has been adamant that this does not mean that such analysis is without effect. What eventalization does *not* generate, so he has argued, is advice or guidelines or instructions as to what is to be done. But what it can bring about is a situation in which people "'no longer know what they do,' so that the acts, gestures, discourses which up until then had seemed to go without saying become problematic, difficult, dangerous" – and this effect is entirely *intentional* (ibid., p.84). Foucauldian analysis therefore doesn't result in a deeper or more true understanding of how power works – it only tries to unsettle what is taken for granted – nor does it aim to produce recipes for action. This kind of analysis is therefore not meant to 'solve' problems, is not meant to gives ideas to reformers to make the world a better one. In relation to this, Foucault has emphasised

that this kind of knowledge is not meant for the 'social workers' or the 'reformers' but rather for the subjects who act.

> Critique doesn't have to be the premise of a deduction which concludes: this then is what needs to be done. It should be an instrument for those who fight, those who resist and refuse what is. Its use should be in processes of conflict and confrontation, essays in refusal. It doesn't have to lay down the law for the law. It isn't a stage of programming. It is a challenge directed to what is. (ibid., p.84)

What Foucault is arguing for is not only a different 'style' of critique but also a different 'audience' for critique, not the ones who try to solve problems and make things better, but those who are struggling to make possible different ways of being and doing – which lies behind Foucault's claim that in a sense "(t)he only important problem is what happens on the ground" (Foucault 1991a, p.83). What this entails is a "*practical* critique that takes the form of a possible transgression" (Foucault 1984, p.45; emph. added). The critical practice of transgression is not meant to overcome limits (not in the least because limits are not only constraining but always also enabling; see Simmons 1995, p.69). Transgression rather is the practical and experimental "illumination of limits" (see Foucault 1977, pp. 33-38; Boyne, 1990).

Foucault's rejection of the modern approach to Enlightenment, where emancipation is seen as the process in which we overcome the workings of power through our understanding of how power works, therefore does not mean the end of any critical work. It rather opens up a new domain for critique and a new critical 'style' or practice called 'transgression.' Transgression, understood as the *experimental* illumination of limits, can take the form of what I have elsewhere called a counter-practice (see Biesta 1998b). Counter-practices should not be designed on the basis of the assumption that they will be better. What matters only is that counter-practices are different. The critical 'work' of counter-practices consists in showing (or proving, as Foucault would say) that the way things are, is only one (limited) possibility. Yet this tiny step is crucial, since it opens up the possibility "of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think" – and in precisely this sense "it is seeking to give a new impetus ... to the undefined work of freedom" (Foucault 1984, p.46).

Encountering Foucault in Lifelong Learning
As I have suggested above, there are roughly three ways in which the authors in this book approach Foucauldian analysis. Some just present an analysis of policies and practice of lifelong learning without drawing any particular conclusions or formulating any specific recommendations. Others present their analysis as a way to unveil the workings of power in the neo-liberal governmentality of lifelong learning and aim to use this understanding to indicate ways in which the effects of the workings of power can be resisted or overcome. The third group, as I have argued, shows more reluctance in formulating recommendations for change as they seem to be aware of some of the reflexive difficulties that follow from using Foucault. Against the background of what I have said in the previous section, I am now in a position to comment on these three different usages of Foucault in a more precise manner. Before I do so, I wish to emphasise that most chapters do not neatly fall within just one of the groups. In most cases authors rely on at least two of these approaches. My comments are therefore not aimed at particular chapters in this book, but focus on the different

approaches or strategies that can be discerned in the chapters. What they reveal, however, are distinctly different ways to use Foucault and conduct Foucauldian analysis. My point is, however, that there are tensions between some of the uses of Foucault and what I see as the specific character of Foucauldian analysis.

With regards to the first group I am inclined to say that they only use 'half' of Foucault in their analyses. They use Foucault's understanding of power and the product of subjectivities/subject-positions predominantly as a theory to describe and analyse policies and practices of lifelong learning. What is lacking in this approach is an awareness of the methodological aspects of Foucauldian analysis. As a result, the authors give the impression that their analyses have to be accepted as a true or accurate account of what is going on in the field of lifelong learning. Such an approach not only lacks the reflexivity Foucauldian analysis would call for. Because of the absence of specific recommendations it also remains unclear where these authors stand politically. It is, in other words, not clear what the normative agenda of these authors – if any – exactly is.

This is not the case with the contributions in the second group where it is quite clear what the motivations for the engagement with Foucauldian analysis are. Here, the main impetus of Foucauldian analysis is to achieve an understanding of the workings of power that can help individuals to overcome some of the impact of the workings of power. Authors in this group thus clearly identify with an emancipatory agenda. But whereas the authors in this group are much more explicit about their motivations and, as a result of this, much more reflexive about both the content and the method of their analysis, the problem, as I see it, is that they combine a post-Foucauldian analysis with a pre-Foucauldian methodology. This is a tempting strategy, not in the least because the Foucauldian analysis of the neo-liberal governmentality of lifelong learning makes a lot of sense and to a certain extent even rings true and such insights might help individuals to do things differently. The problem here, from a Foucauldian perspective, is that it spurs individuals into action on the basis of what we might call a new 'self-evidence,' a new and better way to understand what is 'really' going on. Such an approach lacks reflexivity as well, because it is neither able to problematise the self-evidence that should lead to emancipation and freedom, nor is it able to acknowledge the extent to which such a strategy would itself rely on the operation of power, that is, on the structuring of the possible field of action of others on the basis of a certain self-evidence.

This is where the third approach which I have discerned in the contributions to this book remains closer to Foucault, not only because they combine Foucauldian theory – a Foucauldian understanding of the workings of power and the constitutions of subjectivities and subject-positions – with a Foucauldian methodology, but also because in their analyses they aim to breach the self-evidence of particular practices and policies of lifelong learning without claiming to generate a deeper truth about what actually is going on. Such an approach is not without what we might call 'emancipatory effect.' But it is first of all important to see that this is a different *kind* of emancipation; not an emancipation that tries to escape power but rather one that allows for a different power/knowledge constellation – a different way of being and doing. It is, therefore, not emancipation in the 'traditional' sense as liberation from power, but more something that is akin to what Foucault has so aptly referred to as the undefined work of freedom. It is also important to see that the emancipatory effect of

these kind of analyses is not based on the construction of a new self-evidence, but no the transgression of existing self-evidence in order to show that other subject-positions are possible; subject-positions that, in a sense, are located outside of existing and predominant discourses and, in a sense, cannot be captured or articulated within them. This is very well captured in Ahl's remarks on the 'unmotivated adult' where she shows that the person who does not want to study, and in this respect appears as 'unmotivated' an 'official perspective, actually has no problem and hence has no need for an explanatory theory or for a policy that does something about it. It is, as she writes, "when someone wants someone *else* to do something and this person does not, that the problem arises" (Ahl, this book, p.8[ms]).

Conclusions
In this chapter I have aimed to provide a perspective on the contributions in this book. I have argued that Foucauldian analysis should not only be characterised by a usage of Foucault's theories of power and subjectivity, but should also be informed by his ideas on method and methodology because it is there that, in my view, has made a major intervention in modern philosophy. I have suggested that some of the contributions in this book predominantly focus on Foucault's theories. Others display an awareness of methodological issues, particularly in relation to the question as to what can be 'done' with or on the basis of Foucauldian analysis. Whereas some of the latter approaches give an answer to this question through the adoption of a 'pre-Foucauldian' framework – relying upon a modern understanding of emancipation and Enlightenment – other contributions have been more successful in combining a Foucauldian approach at the level of both content and method. I wish to emphasises, however, that most of chapters combine elements of these three approaches, which means the distinctions I have introduced run through the chapters rather than that they organise the chapters in clear groupings. My comments are, therefore, mainly intended as a reading guide, but I leave it to the readers to judge to what extent they feel that the distinctions I have introduced are helpful in their own encounter with Foucault in lifelong learning.

The chapters in this book do indeed provide a different way to understand aspects of the policies and practices of lifelong learning in contemporary neo-liberal societies. They also show the fruitfulness of a Foucauldian approach, although I have argued that a consistent use of Foucault in the encounter with lifelong learning is more difficult than it may seem, not in the least because Foucault urges us to resist our 'modern' inclinations to come up with better understandings, solutions and plans for action. What Foucault asks us to do is first and foremost to breach self-evidence as this opens up opportunities for doing and being differently. Many of the chapters in this book are successful in questioning the self-evidence of lifelong learning even up to the point where the self-evidence of learning itself is called into question. In this respect the chapters help us to de-naturalise – or eventalize, as Foucault would call it – lifelong learning.

Who is to benefit from all this? Again, Foucault helps us to resist the temptation to assume that analysis should lead to suggestions for policy and practice, to suggestions for improvement and the solution of problems. As some of the chapters in this book show, what is a problem for policy makers is not at all a problem 'on the ground' and to make this visible can help those 'on the ground' to resist adopting the problem-perspective of policy makers. This is not, as I have argued, a strategy that allows them

to escape the workings of power. But it does provide opportunities for different ways of doing and being and thus can provide support for resisting or even refusing particular subjectivities or subject-positions. It is important to bear in mind, however, that contrary to what seems to be the emphasis in Foucault, it can also provide support for the *adoption* of particular subjectivities and subject-positions, particularly where individuals come to the conclusion that the adoption of such positions might well be beneficial to them. This requires judgement, and it is important to see that such judgements cannot be made in the abstract or at the level of theory; they have to be made 'on the ground' as well. Whether we adopt or reject the subject-position of the lifelong learning is therefore, at the end of the day, open to us. What the contributions in this book have helped to make visible is that there is at least this choice. In this respect the chapters have made an important 'opening' in the policies and practices of lifelong learning.

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