‘David Webb makes one of the biggest advances in our understanding of Foucault’s archaeological thinking. He identifies with the utmost lucidity the problem to which Foucault’s 1969 The Archaeology of Knowledge really responds. Archaeology, Webb shows, attempts to determine conditions of knowledge that are historical (and not transcendent) and non-empirical (but formal). Foucault’s Archaeology is a great achievement.’
Leonard Lawlor, Sparks Professor of Philosophy, Penn State University

Sheds new light on a crucial period of Foucault’s work.

This commentary places Michel Foucault’s The Archaeology of Knowledge in the context of the philosophy of mathematics and science. A series of short essays outline key ideas in the work of Jean Cavaillès, Michel Serres and Gaston Bachelard. It was these resources, Webb argues, that defined Foucault’s response to Kant, and his attempt to release thinking in modernity from the impasse he describes at the end of The Order of Things. As such, it provides valuable insight into ideas such as the ‘historical a priori’, and into the radical and experimental nature of Foucault’s philosophy.

David Webb re-situates the interpretation of Foucault’s archaeology, providing a new perspective on his thought, its background and direction of travel.

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