

Michel Foucault

Quotes

Thinking, People, Men, Order, Political, Writing, Book, Law, Exercise, Power, Real, Prison, Art, Practice, Madness, Secret, Desire, Philosophy, Dream, Way

Schools serve the same social functions as prisons and mental institutions- to define, classify, control, and regulate people.

~Michel Foucault

I don't feel that it is necessary to know exactly what I am. The main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning.

~Michel Foucault

People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does.

~Michel Foucault

Where there is power, there is resistance.

~Michel Foucault

There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations

~Michel Foucault

Search for what is good and strong and beautiful in your society and elaborate from there. Push outward. Always create from what you already have. Then you will know what to do.

~Michel Foucault

From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art.

~Michel Foucault

Are the prisons overpopulated, or is the population over-imprisoned ?

~Michel Foucault

Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain

strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society.

~Michel Foucault

I am hopelessly in love with a memory. An echo from another time, another place.

~Michel Foucault

Power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms.

~Michel Foucault

The judges of normality are present everywhere. We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the social worker-judge.

~Michel Foucault

One cannot attend to oneself, take care of oneself, without a relationship to another person.

~Michel Foucault

Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same.

~Michel Foucault

As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end.

~Michel Foucault

The gaze that sees is the gaze that dominates.

~Michel Foucault

Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?

~Michel Foucault

Knowledge is not for knowing: knowledge is for cutting.

~Michel Foucault

What I seek is a permanent opening of possibilities.

~Michel Foucault

Domination is not that solid and global kind of domination that one person exercises over others, or one group over another, but the manifold forms of domination that can be exercised within society.

~Michel Foucault

Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are.

~Michel Foucault

Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same. More than one person, doubtless like me, writes in order to have no face.

~Michel Foucault

Power is everywhere...because it comes from everywhere.

~Michel Foucault

My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad.

~Michel Foucault

Total surveillance is increasingly the general condition of society as a whole.

~Michel Foucault

Death left its old tragic heaven and became the lyrical core of man: his invisible truth, his visible secret.

~Michel Foucault

[Knowledge is governed not by] a theory of knowledge, but by a theory of discursive practice.

~Michel Foucault

The first task of the doctor is ... political: the struggle against disease must begin with a war against bad government." Man will be totally and definitively cured only if he is first liberated.

~Michel Foucault

Truth is not by nature free - nor error servile - but that its production is thoroughly imbued with relations of power.

~Michel Foucault

Our society is not one of spectacle but of surveillance.

~Michel Foucault

Truth is undoubtedly the sort of error that cannot be refuted because it was hardened into an unalterable form in the long baking process of history

~Michel Foucault

I'm no prophet. My job is making windows where there were once walls.

~Michel Foucault

At every moment, step by step, one must confront what one is thinking and saying with what one is doing, what one is.

~Michel Foucault

The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue by reason about madness, could only have come into existence in such a silence.

~Michel Foucault

What desire can be contrary to nature since it was given to man by nature itself?

~Michel Foucault

Since the Fall, man had accepted labor as a penance and for its power to work redemption. It was not a law of nature which forced man to work, but the effect of a curse.

~Michel Foucault

'The prison' begins well before its doors. It begins as soon as you leave your house - and even before.

~Michel Foucault

Politics is not what it pretends to be, the expression of a collective will. Politics breathes well only where this will is multiple, hesitant, confused, and obscure even to itself.

~Michel Foucault

We are freer than we think.

~Michel Foucault

Madness, in its wild, untamable words, proclaims its own meaning; in its chimeras, it utters its secret truth.

~Michel Foucault

One makes war to win, not because it's just.

~Michel Foucault

The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body

~Michel Foucault

To change something in the minds of people - that's the role of an intellectual.

~Michel Foucault

I don't write a book so that it will be the final word; I write a book so that other books are possible, not necessarily written by me.

~Michel Foucault

One should try to locate power at the extreme of its exercise, where it is always less legal in character.

~Michel Foucault

Why should the lamp or the house be an art object but not our life?

~Michel Foucault

Visibility is a trap.

~Michel Foucault

The lyricism of marginality may find inspiration in the image of the outlaw, the great social nomad, who prowls on the confines of a docile, frightened order.

~Michel Foucault

The soul is the prison of the body.

~Michel Foucault

Madness designates the equinox between the vanity of night's hallucinations and the non-being of light's judgments.

~Michel Foucault

The practice of S/M is the creation of pleasure.... And that's why S/M is really a subculture. It's a process of invention. S/M is the use of a strategic relationship as a source of pleasure.

~Michel Foucault

In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place

of adventure and the police take the place of pirates.

~Michel Foucault

It might be said that all knowledge is linked to the essential forms of cruelty.

~Michel Foucault

There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying things.

~Michel Foucault

The intellectual was rejected and persecuted at the precise moment when the facts became incontrovertible, when it was forbidden to say that the emperor had no clothes.

~Michel Foucault

The 'Enlightenment', which discovered the liberties, also invented the disciplines.

~Michel Foucault

To work is to undertake to think something other than what one has thought before

~Michel Foucault

Modern society is perverse, not in spite of its puritanism or as if from a backlash provoked by its hypocrisy; it is in actual fact, and directly, perverse.

~Michel Foucault

One thing in any case is certain: man is neither the oldest nor the most constant problem that has been posed for human knowledge.

~Michel Foucault

Do not think that one has to be sad in order to be militant, even though the thing one is fighting is abominable.

~Michel Foucault

I don't feel that it is necessary to know exactly what I am.

~Michel Foucault

Freedom of conscience entails more dangers than authority and despotism.

~Michel Foucault

What strikes me is the fact that in our society, art has become something which is only related to objects, and not to individuals, or to life.

~Michel Foucault

Knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting.

~Michel Foucault

There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses.

~Michel Foucault

The best moment of love is when the lover leaves in the taxi.

~Michel Foucault

We must escape and help others to escape the two readymade formulas of the pure sexual encounter and the lovers' fusion of identities.

~Michel Foucault

You may have killed God beneath the weight of all that you have said; but don't imagine that, with all that you are saying, you will make a man that will live longer than he.

~Michel Foucault

there is no glory in punishing

~Michel Foucault

We demand that sex speak the truth and we demand that it tell us our truth, or rather, the deeply buried truth of that truth about ourselves which we think we possess in our immediate consciousness.

~Michel Foucault

Prison continues, on those who are entrusted to it, a work begun elsewhere, which the whole of society pursues on each individual through innumerable mechanisms of discipline.

~Michel Foucault

Justice must always question itself, just as society can exist only by means of the work it does on itself and on its institutions.

~Michel Foucault

The most defenseless tenderness and the bloodiest of powers have a similar need of confession. Western man has become a confessing animal.

~Michel Foucault

In its function, the power to punish is not essentially different from that of curing or educating.

~Michel Foucault

Political power goes much deeper than one suspects; there are centres and invisible, little-known points of support; its true resistance, its true solidity is perhaps where one doesn't expect it.

~Michel Foucault

It is meaningless to speak in the name of - or against - Reason, Truth,

or Knowledge.

~Michel Foucault

What is peculiar to modern societies is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence, but that they dedicated themselves to speaking of it ad infinitum, while exploiting it as the secret.

~Michel Foucault

Believe what is productive is not sedentary but nomadic.

~Michel Foucault

The court is the bureaucracy of the law. If you bureaucratise popular justice then you give it the form of a court.

~Michel Foucault

Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their morality when we write.

~Michel Foucault

Life itself was only futility, vain words, a squabble of cap and bells.

~Michel Foucault

Madness is the absolute break with the work of art; it forms the constitutive moment of abolition, which dissolves in time the truth of the work of art.

~Michel Foucault

Nature, keeping only useless secrets, had placed within reach and in sight of human beings the things it was necessary for them to know.

~Michel Foucault

It is over life, throughout its unfolding, that power establishes its dominion; death is power's limit, the moment that escapes it; death

becomes the most secret aspect of existence, the most private.

~Michel Foucault

Unreason is in the same relation to reason as dazzlement to the brightness of daylight itself.

~Michel Foucault

it is the certainty of being punished and not the horrifying spectacle of public punishment that must discourage crime

~Michel Foucault

Institutions of knowledge, of foresight and care, such as medicine, help to support the political power. It's also obvious, even to the point of scandal, in certain cases related to psychiatry.

~Michel Foucault

Little information is published on prisons, it is one of the hidden regions of our social system, one of the dark zones of our life.

~Michel Foucault

I'm not making a problem out of a personal question; I make of a personal question an absence of a problem.

~Michel Foucault

To punish is the most difficult thing there is. A society such as ours needs to question every aspect of punishment as it is practiced everywhere: in the army, the schools, the factories.

~Michel Foucault

Today, criminal justice functions and justifies itself only by this perpetual reference to something other than itself, by this unceasing reinscription in non-judicial systems.

~Michel Foucault

But the guilty person is only one of the targets of punishment. For punishment is directed above all at others, at all the potentially guilty.

~Michel Foucault

Where can an interrogation lead us which does not follow reason in its horizontal course, but seeks to retrace in time that constant vertically which confronts European culture with what it is not?

~Michel Foucault

What is constitutive is the action that divides madness, and not the science elaborated once this division is made.

~Michel Foucault

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