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Quotes by Foucault, Michel

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Michel Foucault (October 15, 1926 – June 26, 1984) was a French philosopher who held a chair at the Collège de France, which he gave the title "The History of Systems of Thought." His writings have had an enormous impact on other scholarly work: Foucault's influence extends across the humanities and social sciences, and across many applied and professional areas of study.

The strategic adversary is fascism... the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us.

- Foucault, Michel

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

- Foucault, Michel

There are more ideas on earth than intellectuals imagine. And these ideas are more active, stronger, more resistant, more passionate than politicians think. We have to be there at the birth of ideas, the bursting outward of their force: not in books expressing them, but in events manifesting this force, in struggles carried on around ideas, for or against them. Ideas do not rule the world. But it is because the world has ideas... that it is not passively ruled by those who are its leaders or those who would like to teach it, once

and for all, what it must think.

- Foucault, Michel

The work of an intellectual is not to mould the political will of others; it is, through the analyses that he does in his own field, to re-examine evidence and assumptions, to shake up habitual ways of working and thinking, to dissipate conventional familiarities, to re-evaluate rules and institutions and to participate in the formation of a political will (where he has his role as citizen to play).

- Foucault, Michel

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.

- Foucault, Michel

Chance does not speak essentially through words nor can it be seen in their convolution. It is the eruption of language, its sudden appearance. It's not a night twinkle with stars, an illuminated sleep, nor a drowsy vigil. It is the very edge of consciousness.

- Foucault, Michel

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.

- Foucault, Michel

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.

- Foucault, Michel

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.

- Foucault, Michel

Psychoanalysis can unravel some of the forms of madness; it remains a stranger to the sovereign enterprise of unreason. It can neither limit nor transcribe, nor most certainly explain, what is essential in this enterprise.

- Foucault, Michel

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

- Foucault, Michel

If repression has indeed been the fundamental link between power, knowledge, and sexuality since the classical age, it stands to reason that we will not be able to free ourselves from it except at a considerable cost.

- Foucault, Michel

Freedom of conscience entails more dangers than authority and despotism.

- Foucault, Michel

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.

- Foucault, Michel



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