



## Foucault Live: Interviews, 1961-84

*Michel Foucault, Sylvère Lotringer (Editor), John Johnston (Translator), Lysa Hochroth (Translator)*

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Currently in its fourth printing, *Foucault Live* is the most accessible and exhaustive introduction to Foucault's thought to date. Composed of every extant interview made by Foucault from the mid-60s until his death in 1984, *Foucault Live* sheds new light on the philosopher's ideas about friendship, the intent behind his classical studies, while clarifying many of the professional and popular misinterpretations of his ideas over the course of his career. As Gilles Deleuze noted, "the interviews in this book go much further than anything Foucault ever wrote, and they are indispensable in understanding his life work." Most notably, *Foucault Live* includes interviews he made with the gay underground press during his stays in America during the 1970s. In them, Foucault suggests that homosexuality presents a new paradigm for ways of living beyond the predictable, binary couple. All of the philosopher's interests, from madness and delinquency to film and sexuality, and their resultant writings, are probed by knowledgeable critics and journalists. After reading this book, the reader can explore key notions such as *episteme*, *savoir* and *connaissance*, archeology, and *archive*, without the knitted brow that plagued Foucault's public when he was alive. This is the guide to Foucault's life as an agent provocateur in the world of philosophy and scholarship.

## Foucault Live: Interviews, 1961-84 Details

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### **Nelson says**

Exploring connections among the following interviews: "Friendship as a Way of Life," "The Ethics of the Concern for Self," "The Aesthetics of Existence," and "Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity." Foucault generously gives so much thought to work with. Creativity is the name of the game here when utilizing his ideas, making creative connections among and with them within the context and concerns of cultivating discourses of criticality... :)

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### **Spoust1 says**

In his books Foucault seems to foreground history itself - of madness, of sexuality, of the prison, of the clinic, etc. - meaning that it requires close reading to see the philosophical and political import of his thought, though the histories - divided (I think superficially) into "genealogies" and "archaeologies" - only matter inasmuch as they reverberate on the levels of philosophy and politics. "The search for descent," Foucault says in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," "is not the erecting of foundations; on the contrary, it disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself." I maintain that Foucault is a philosopher, but he is a philosopher because of the effects his works, which are not straightforwardly philosophical, have. Althusser defines philosophy as an intervention in science; it is in this sense that Foucault is a philosopher.

But I have said nothing of "Foucault Live"! This is because how good - and essential - "Foucault Live" is will be lost without a certain context, which I have tried to provide above. "Foucault Live" compiles all of the interviews with Foucault - and Foucault is brilliant in conversation: matter-of-fact and clear as he is nowhere else, while still possessed of the same careful intelligence he shows off in his books. Apparently among Foucault's many gifts was the ability to explain himself in person as few can.

This is one of the few places to find Foucault talking openly about the gay rights movement, structuralism and post-structuralism, Sartre's criticisms - most of the time what we are getting is Foucault's thoughts about something current. Foucault also talks about his books, including "The Order of Things," "Archaeology of Knowledge," and "I, Pierre Riviere," a collection of texts about a 19th century murder case that includes the murderer's memoir.

Somewhere Gilles Deleuze, who was Foucault's friend, says that this is the best introduction to Foucault. I agree 100%. I own a number of secondary source Foucault introductions. This is more comprehensive and clearer than all of them - and it is Foucault in his own words.

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### **Melanie says**

I just wish it was called, "Foucault Unplugged." Haha.

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**Kathleen says**

Foucault's interviews are useful because in them he provides explanations of his more controversial theses and responds to critics. Also interesting because within the interviews he often discusses topics which he does not address elsewhere, or only touches on elsewhere.

Interesting read--although I don't think it's so necessary for anyone building a Foucault library. My advice: get it from the library, photocopy the best parts.

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**Jill says**

I thought Foucault was god as an undergrad and I read whatever I could lay my slimy paws on. This is a bunch of interviews and lectures. Some good, some rehashed, some filthy. Not an intro to his thought or writing, but interesting if you're familiar with his work.

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