

v1: 8 October 2023

Commentary

Foucault 40 Years Later – An Intimate History

Peer-approved: 8 October 2023

© The Author(s) 2023. This is an Open Access article under the CC BY 4.0 license.

Qeios, Vol. 5 (2023)
ISSN: 2632-3834

Pietro Barbetta¹

1. International School of Systemic Therapy (in Trans-cultural Contexts), University of Bergamo, Italy

In the following essay, I am going to account for my experience and my struggle in studying and learning Foucault, 40 years after his death and, at the same time, after more than 50 years since I started to read his work. Now I am absolutely sure that reading Foucault during all these years, as well as other authors – but in a peculiar way with Foucault – was part of my personal analyses; I would call it the literary part of my personal sessions. Foucault was not just a difficult baroque writer to be understood; he was helping me to emerge from the typical provincial middle-class mentality, which was not just awareness; it was much more. Instead of cognitive awareness, I should call it an upheaval of feelings. Foucault was one of the most scandalous anti-humanists in the humanities; the reading of Foucault permitted me to cross disgust, anger, and fear. He was for me – together with Deleuze, Bateson, Pasolini, Guattari, and many others – like Caron, making me see the marvelous panorama of hell: humanity.

Correspondence: papers@team.qeios.com — Qeios will forward to the authors

Foucault's Training: *l'âge classique*

I started reading Foucault when I was about 18, more than 50 years ago. The year was 1973; my eye was caught by *l'Histoire de la folie dans l'âge classique*¹ and, being it the first youthful approach, I naturally opted for the Italian version. *L'âge Classique*... such a mirthful yet enigmatic era; the question is, where exactly would one place it on the timeline? Well, that depends on how historians categorize the different ages. Some say that the beginning of Modernism dawned at the very end of the 15th century, coeval with three main events: the discovery of the Americas, the rejection of the Jewish and Arab people in Spain and Portugal, and the invention of the Press propounding the advent of Public Opinion. Others consider the period between the 15th and the 17th Century to be the blooming of a new culture, following the Middle Ages – e.g., the use of perspective in (the visual art of) painting – the famous Renaissance. Foucault – in *The Order of Things*² – writes about an epistemic turn, from the 16th to 17th Century –

the similitude paradigm versus the distinction paradigm. Nonetheless, some historians regard Modernism as an analogue to the Industrial Era in England, or to the French or American Revolutions. To me, *L'âge classique* is still a mystery: I suppose we can more or less place it between the end of the 15th and 18th Century. The *Classical Age* is, however, the period in which madness was not yet separated from other alternative ways of life. So much so that Erasmus, Ariosto, Brandt, Cervantes, and Shakespeare were chanting madness as a heroic enterprise, although dissident and bizarre. I suppose that Foucault was referring to these 2/3 hundred years – 1400 to the end of 1600 – that separated the Middle Ages from Modernism, as constituting a kind of *Hors d'Ouvre* before Modernity, when the Bourgeoisie became a stable new dominant class, purloining power from the Nobles. Following the Classical Age, madness became a new form of social *partage*. Be that as it may, in the English translation of *Folie et déraison. Histoire de la folie dans l'âge classique*, everything is simplified to *Madness and Civilization: a History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*³, a title that avoids entering the controversial question of *Classic Age* and transforms *la déraison* into *Reason*.

Following Foucault, prior to madness, leprosy was the main character of the *partage*, along with other infections and miseries, in lieu of the 14th-century plague. Starting from the end of the 18th Century, beggars, thieves, laggards, elderly people, homosexuals, women in revolt – or simply restless – and other genres of outsiders became *partagés* from the ‘normal population’. While madness underwent another partition: it became an illness or a disease of some sort, to be cured by “men of Medicine”.

Back to my experience as a reader, in 1973, at the age of 18, the above-mentioned synthesis of Foucault’s thought was too complex to be grasped. Why was it that in order to understand Madness, I had to regress and relate to Plague, Leprosy, and Infections? I abandoned the book after a few pages with the feeling of entering a field of immensity, and I felt lost and baffled. I perceived the text as being too difficult to read all by myself; I felt stupid, almost to the point of considering having cognitive impairment.

Only now do I realize it was not a cognitive issue but a feeling: I was overwhelmed by Disgust and Angst, both feelings that impeded me from continuing. Foucault was talking about leprosy, a nomadic disease. I remember waking up in the middle of the night due to nausea and dizziness. I was most probably having nightmares, and it was all certainly connected to my education. I was brought up in a provincial town on the outskirts of Milan, among the conformist families of the petite-bourgeoisie born out of the economic boom. Each family possessed its own *villetta*, surrounded by fences, with a barking dog that used to assault whoever dared to approach the house, marking the territory as ‘mine’. There, I learned to distinguish the good from the bad, where good meant defending one’s private property and bad meant being nomadic, e.g. – Gypsies, Jews, and migrants.

Leprosy, during my years of elementary and middle school, was described as an ancient contagious disease, probably caused by the bad habits of poor people and seen as a dirty, disgusting, and contagious illness. Leprous people were nomadic people. Nobody in the school I attended was teaching the *Truth*⁴: that leprosy was just a chronic disease consequent to a bacteria named ‘*Mycobacterium leprae*’ or even that the word “leprosy” should be avoided because medical doctors were facing the prejudice of the ancient stigma. Leprosy, in my elementary school, was just a condition of beings banned from town for “good” reasons; leprous people were almost perceived as enemies, people to be *partagés*.

When my family and I moved to the big city – before reading Foucault – I soon became a left-wing agitprop – I was 15 – within the Movement of the Students. The city was highly influenced by the events of May 1968 in Paris, and it was now only 1969. Nevertheless, my previous education in a small province of northern Italy was still acting unconsciously. My new awareness – my *Klassenbewusstsein* – was not enough to help me understand *The Wretched of the Earth*.⁵ During this time of *liberation*, I remember experiencing different feelings of disgust, anxiety, and/or sexual arousal that made me give up books, movies, theatrical plays, and music. It was difficult to bear, but at the same time, I was curious. I obstinately insisted on: Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Salò*, or *Canterbury tales*; Nagisa Oshima’s *In the realm of sense*; Cecil Taylor’s Jazz Concerts; books by Sade and other works of art hard to digest, very bizarre and transgressive. Due to all these works – including *l’Histoire de la folie* – my feelings were strongly challenged. I was angry with the authors and against myself, in a word: *scandalized*.

A few years later, in 1978 – when I was 24 – I was preparing for an exam at university, and so I came into *Surveiller et punir*⁶. A follow-up book by Foucault, published in 1975. The *supplice* of Damians was disgusting as well, but there was, alongside the disgust, the cruelty towards Damien’s body. It was clear that Damians’ *Persona* – his *Habeas Corpus* – was brutally violated, and at the same time, the chronical reports sounded somehow pitiful. An ambiguity between what Damians was supposed to deserve for his crime and the disgust towards the cruelty of the torturers – even the chronicle of the time seemed somewhat sad for what they were facing.

During ten years of my life – from 15 to 24 – I got myself involved in all sorts of new experiences: romantic, violent, amazing, awful; I met new people, and my moods were constantly changing. The torment of Damians became a breaking point, an upheaval. I was able to follow all the chronicles of the *supplice* pertaining to the Archives mentioned by Foucault, and – in reading Damians – I felt a mix of indignation, compassion, and mercy for his agony. My disgust, for the first time, was not linked to anger against the victim, but to compassion and mercy for Damians. Even my dreams were morphing. I later returned my focus to *l’Histoire de la folie*, allowing myself to have the courage to read the entire story of leprous pilgrims cast outside the walls of the towns, flâneurs in decomposition, with bells announcing their arrival, the outcast human cattle.

A new discovery of Foucault hit me like a bolt of lightning when I told my professor of political philosophy that my final dissertation was going to be about Friedrich Nietzsche. The title was *The Intellectual in Nietzsche*. Yet again, while reading Nietzsche's work and the scholars of German philosophy, I ran into Foucault (and Deleuze). At that time – starting from the Seventies – the Italian philosopher Giorgio Colli and the philologist Mazzino Montinari started creating a vast general enterprise⁷: editing a correct and critical publication of the complete works of Nietzsche in four languages: German, Japanese, French, and Italian. Of course, both authors – Foucault and Deleuze⁸ – took advantage of this task and went on writing marvellous critical essays about Nietzsche and, in the case of Foucault, the genealogical method.

As far as my own contribution in describing the genealogical method is concerned, I would aver that it derives from *The Origin of the Species* by Charles Darwin. It is the idea that between the origin of any biological entity and its function there is heterogeneity. This method of investigation changed the field of biology from Lamarck's statement: "the function creates the organ." On the contrary, the evolution of the species is much more complex than Lamarckism, and it requires a never-ending empirical investigation of every singular biological organism. Darwin had a strong influence on Nietzsche, who, apropos, was one of the few scholars who really understood Darwin, without any manipulation of his thought. Nietzsche extended Darwin's method to social sciences, particularly in his work *On Genealogy of Morals*. Nietzsche's question is: if we are still investigating the origin of the species, why are we so sure that the function of a social institution coincides with the origins of the same institution? What are the origins of the mainstream morals within Western society?

Foucault's Legacy

All of Foucault's research is purposefully aimed at conveying interconnections and producing strong hypotheses about the origins of the institutions of this day and age: Madness/Asylum; Crime/Prison; Disease/Clinics; Words/Things. When returning from his mind-opening trip to the US, the French philosopher and psychologist continued his work with a new positive approach to sexuality and a strong sense of criticism towards psychoanalysis: *desire* versus *use of pleasures*; *parrësia*; the care of self, technologies of Self⁹, etc. It was the period when, more or less after 1975, the influence of Foucault became important within the US,

particularly in California, and in the Anglo-Saxon world, particularly among women scholars.

Following Foucault's line of thought, the Medievalist Caroline Walker Bynum¹⁰ studied the fasting saints in ecstasy, nurturing their bodies solely with the body of Christ, the sacred host, or, even, at times, with the skin crusts of lepers while cleaning their bodies, as penitence, as a peculiar form of self-flagellation. Most of them, unfortunately, ended up dying of hunger and finally reunited with God through death by starvation. Or the Modern Historian Joan Jacobs Brumberg's *Fasting Girls*¹¹, who analyzes clinical cases from historical archives to show how, in the 19th Century, *medical men* [sic] were considering eating disorders to be an expression of girls [sic] self-deception and were patriarchally 'treating' the "fasting girls" with a Medical man *mentality*, within the Victorian moral context.

I must confess that the Foucauldian method applied to what clinicians nowadays call *anorexia* was much more precious to me than Hilde Bruch's and Mara Selvini's¹² clinical hypothesis of diagnosing and treating *Eating Disorders*. It was through the writings of Bynum and Brumberg that I discovered that the anorectic body is a feminine body going through an exhausting and desperate endeavor to rid itself of a patriarchal society and family: a line of flight from the tiny triangle mom-dad-child¹³.

Foucault created a new *Zeitgeist*, the sense of a different approach when conducting research: the genealogical method, the same method used by Darwin for Biology and Nietzsche for Philosophy. A transdisciplinary approach among psychology, social history, and anthropology; a new rigorous and imaginative way for qualitative research. Alas, only a few psychologists know Foucault's or his epigones' work nowadays. The academic institutions of psychology only expedite the EBM, confusing the work of psychologists with that of technicians.

Foucault now – within the academic psychological institutions – is secretly banned; academia has hidden the difference between a literary-philosophical-anthropologic system of thought and technology. There is a famous distinction between a technician and an intellectual. The intellectual is a technician as well; nonetheless, the role of the intellectual is to reflect and think about the technique he/she uses and not just apply it blindly. I think that – among other intellectual professions – psychologists should also exercise this critical practice. Foucault himself got a degree in Psychology.

Ethically, Foucault was a thinker who influenced the humanities to get rid of humanism in order to suspend any – historical, medical, institutional, psychoanalytical – moral judgment. A meta-positioning – *hétérotopie* – looking at the world from the outside, as if one were visiting from another planet. His philosophy was the philosophy of historical a-priori.

Particularly while travelling through the Americas (Berkeley, Vermont, Rio de Janeiro), Foucault witnessed and engaged in the sexual liberation movement. Foucault was notoriously homosexual. Being homosexual in Europe – back in the Seventies – mainly meant living a private life with your mate if you belonged to the “noble” side of intellectual people, or simply being persecuted as a vicious criminal if you were poor. Both sides of the political panorama – right and left wing – had issues against homosexuality.

In the States, during the 1970s, the sexual liberation movement was blatantly evident on the streets: symbols, bars, theatres, movies, public manifestations, fights with the police, public complaints against rapes of lesbian women, etc. A fantastic novel one can read to get acquainted with such a social climate is *Stone Butch Blues*, by Leslie Feinberg¹⁴; it is the story of a rebellion seen in this autobiography through the eyes of a stone butch lesbian who decides to transition to a male body.

Furthermore, in 1975, Foucault went from Berkeley to Death Valley where, for the first time, he took hallucinogenic drugs. Two American writers, James Miller in 1993¹⁵ and Simeon Wade¹⁶, more recently, wrote that these drugs completely transfigured Foucault’s mind. According to Wade’s biography, after having taken the drug, Foucault, in tears, claimed to see The Truth.

The image of Foucault’s character became a chiasm. All over Europe – West and East – the image of the *Maître à Penser* was of a person in a suit and tie, much like the representative of Academic Etiquette. Nobody was interested in Foucault’s private way of life. Yes, a homosexual person, but living in his house with his companion, in privacy behind closed, placated doors. In the Americas, Foucault became part of the gender social movement: gay pride, feminist rebellion against patriarchal families and society, sexual liberation, free drugs revendication, black power movements. It was as if, in Death Valley, after having hallucinations, Foucault was having an unveiling vision of totality – whatever totality means – under the veil of normality, like in Nietzsche: the *Ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen* (Eternal Return)¹⁷.

Sexuality and desire, a controversy

In 1976, the first volume of *L'Histoire de la Sexualité* was published, entitled *La volonté de Savoir*¹⁸. *La volonté de Savoir* was mainly a pamphlet against psychoanalysis. Although, in my opinion, Foucault was not against psychoanalysis, rather he was strongly criticizing the mainstream of psychoanalytical practice, particularly the so-called *primary castration*, as it was theorized by the Anglo-Saxon Ego-Psychology.

When *The Will of Knowledge* was published – in 1976 in French, in 1978 in English – Foucault was probably influenced by the 1972 book *L'Anti-Œdipe*¹⁹ by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.

At the time, Foucault and Deleuze were not just friends; their *Weltanschauung* was very close. They both felt the need to liberate sexuality, mental disorder, and sin/crime from what they both felt to be an influence of the Christian vision of the Original Sin imposed by Augustine. The recent volume, *Confessions of the Flesh*²⁰, edited recently, many years after Foucault’s death, seems to confirm my hypothesis.

Then, in 1981-82, the course at the *Collège de France* took the title of *L'Herméutique du sujet*²¹, and, in 1984, the two books: *L'Usage des plaisirs* and *Le Souci de soi*²² were also published, leaving the last and final course, the one that announced his death by suddenly interrupting: *Le courage de la vérité*: 1984²³. Many of Foucault’s scholars consider the period of 8 years between the first and the other two volumes of the *History of Sexuality* to be an epiphany, a change of Foucault’s position, although in continuity: from a Power/Knowledge negative version of Modernism to the use of pleasure as a positive reconstruction of life and sexuality. Reading *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, one can understand the *travail* of the author in changing the focus of his point of view after his experiences in the Americas; this course was the preparation for what happened later on, the change of perspective.

Be that as it may, the 1981-82 course at the *Collège de France* and the two following volumes of *L'histoire de la sexualité* – *La souci de soi* and *L'usage des plaisirs* published in 1984 – assume a different position from *La volonté de savoir*. During these years – 1976-1984 – Foucault broke with the mainstream psychoanalytical idea that *Desire* is a universal ground for sexuality.

Desire, like all other institutions, has its function in psychoanalysis as well as in the mainstream of the Western world, particularly within Catholicism (Augustine, Aquinas), psychiatry (Kafft-Ebing’s

Psychopathia Sexualis), and libertine literature (Boccaccio, Casanova, Restif de La Bretonne, Sade). From Augustine to Sade, although they appear opposite, the approach comes across as being very similar; the Castle of Silling²⁴ is the best description of Hell, after Dante Alighieri's. Nonetheless, until the pre-Christian Roman era, and in the Ancient Greeks' time – as well as within the pre-modern Oriental world – there was no such thing as *sexual desire*. Foucault claims that the problem of sexuality, as well as the problem of affective exchanges – during the late Roman times – was connected to *the use of pleasures*. In the following brief online video, recorded in 1983, Foucault approaches *Desire* as a social/historical a-priori fact, while in Greco-Roman antiquity, as well as in Chinese Erotic Art, the 'problem' was *pleasure*. In what manner and *measure* could one achieve pleasure?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNcQA3MSdIE>

At the same time, in reclaiming *desire* as one of the most important instances of Western society, Foucault himself considers the emergence of the Self: the ethic of desire introduces a new form of meditation, and I dare to go beyond Foucault by thinking that the Greek tragedy is one example – the first I know – of the many struggles of the "Self". One of the origins of Western civilization. The Self *before* the Christian, psychiatric, and psychoanalytical castrations, who makes good use of pleasures using *askesis*, meditation, and the exam of conscience, day by day taking care of oneself. The problem I pose – as a psychotherapist – is to think about whether this is a new form of psychoanalysis or psychotherapy – for example, systemic psychotherapy²⁵ – or another kind of practice to be invented in the future.

As you may know, Foucault died in 1984, during the last courses at the Collège de France; he probably did not have the chance to read the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*²⁶, *A Thousand Plateaux*, by his former friend Gilles Deleuze and by the psychoanalyst Felix Guattari.

In *A Thousand Plateaux*, the two authors quote Gregory Bateson²⁷, an outsider intellectual, a Briton who lived in California, an odd type of British anthropologist, who – as Foucault, though for a different purpose – also took hallucinogenic drugs. So Deleuze and Guattari write:

Bateson cites Balinese culture as an example: mother-child sexual games, and even quarrels among men, undergo this bizarre intensive stabilization. "Some sort of continuing plateau of intensity is substituted for [sexual] climax," war, or a culmination point. It is a regrettable characteristic of the Western mind to relate

expressions and actions to exterior or transcendent ends, instead of evaluating them on a plane of consistency on the basis of their intrinsic value. (Deleuze & Guattari, p.122, translated by Brian Massumi).

Bateson, after research held with Margaret Mead in Bali, observed the constitution of the Balinese character. A character in which people tend to avoid any kind of escalation on the top of an interaction – called *Schismogenesis* – as avoiding fighting, submission, war, orgasm, etc. The above quote is just a brief description of the creation of moods, sexuality, anger, and everyday life within another world, such as Bali in 1936, with no Christian and capitalist influence, at least before the hegemony of colonialism, when patriarchal civilization was probably not yet influencing the Balinese way of life.

The two key words in the above quote are *intensity* and *climax*, and – concerning sexuality – the question raised is: is it possible to keep sexual intensity on a continuing plateau without sexual climax? Is sexual climax the only way to orgasm? Or, as in the use of pleasures, does orgasm not necessarily mean explosion?

Usually, the difference between *desire* and *needs* in psychoanalysis, according to Foucault's critique – even amongst Lacanian psychoanalysts – is that *needs* deal with transcendence, something that can be acquired: the Reign of Heaven, food, cars, clothes, videogames, medical service, *Californi(cation)* – as a Rock group chants – and orgasmic climax. To the contrary, *desire* is immanent: it is an infinite path, which remains over your life, a joy forever.

The last message derived from Foucault's history of sexuality is probably the following: within the Christian dogma of the Original Sin, sexuality can be partially mended under a man's administration of it: the man can ejaculate and have a moment of lust but with the sole purpose of impregnating the woman; only then can the sin be considered venial. However, if the sexual intercourse lasts, it becomes lust, a capital vice. In other words: the briefer the male orgasm time, the lighter the sin.²⁸ Chastity is reserved for clergymen, whereas procreation is prescribed to marriage to the point that if a couple of married people do not procreate, the marriage is not effective and can be annulled. A family in a *State of Grace* must have as many children as possible, under the rule of the Father.

Marx, Weber and Freud, a new synthesis

A similar pattern was transferred, within Protestant Calvinism, from sexual administration to the Capitalistic Machine. As the *child* must be, as soon as possible, the only *product* of the sexual machine, the *profit* must be the only sign of being in the State of Grace: *profit* must be reinvested – just as children must be procreated – to *reproduce* the workforce. The topic concerning sexuality and the *Spirit of Capitalism* is the not-admitted debt Foucault has to Karl Marx and Marx's antagonist, Max Weber²⁹.

The word used by Foucault to describe the administration of life is *Governmentality*. A way to give a sense of an everyday life led in practicality. In my twenties, Michel Foucault researched *Modern Power*: it is no longer the Power of Kings to let one live or end one's life; it is now the Power of Knowledge that must keep one alive as long as possible for the reproduction of the working class: clinics, education, asylums, schools, panopticon jail system, control of populations, etc. It is for this reason that Modernism – from the 18th to the 20th Century – has dealt with repression. According to Marx and Freud³⁰, repression – what is called *Unterdrückung* in German – derives from frustration, a pre-conscious phenomenon (Freud, 1915) of a new form of submission of the proletarians, colonized, women, homosexuals, fools, handicapped, which – according to Marx – are supposed to recognize and accept their designated chains or die of starvation: *Klassenbewusstsein* (Marx, 1845), or – in Freud – the Ego-liberation from the three landlords: Super-Ego, Es, and Reality. Unfortunately, this plea for liberation and awareness did not succeed. Foucault – at the end of Modernism – was the first to see and recognize this failure, operationalizing the Genealogical Machine, once again, following Charles Darwin and Friedrich Nietzsche.

From Foucault on, there is no more history, but genealogy. After colonialism, the Shoah, and other disasters and massacres created by humanity, we should realize that “memory is like a train, you can see it getting smaller as it goes away” (Tom Waits). The only offspring that maintains stability is Art, which requires no educational basis to make one feel affection. The third Millennium begins with a new Moloch: AI is coming to be our new cultural plague. Is it yet another new God? Politicians, Businessmen, Managers, Media, and supposed or pseudo-Scientists influence the new generation of Psychologists and Psychiatrists who

graduate from technological schools that teach and preach objective tests, the use of medication, and neuroimaging practices. AI is going to become the more sophisticated delivery of control over the population.

Going back to my intimate, personal story. I was a young guy who became old in the outskirts of the Western World. I was not brought up within the *European Tribe*³¹, nor did I belong to the post-colonial world. *Strictu sensu*, I am not a woman, so I rarely encountered sexual harassment: when I was just a child, I only had to deal with bullying on a few occasions. It took me a long time and patience to finally be able to rid myself of that veil of so-called ‘normality’ that had been branded onto me in primary school.

It did not happen in Silvaplana – as it did to Nietzsche – nor in Death Valley – as it did to Foucault. I was, maybe I still am, entangled within the middle-class petit-bourgeoisie of the sub-province of a *European Tribe*.

When I felt my mind opening, I started to enjoy Foucault with all my senses. I learned not to get immediately to the point. I learned to avoid the paratactic style, to be curious, and to remain more focused on the text, as a reader and writer, to enjoy the style and connect the singularity of each moment with the whole picture on the canvas, going back and forth between the details and the ensemble, coming back to the details with a new gaze. Systemic epistemology, in my view, starts with the *History of Systems of Thought*, a new topic to be taught – inaugurated by Foucault in 1970 – a new investigation of the social unconscious, the unconscious of the World, the same unconscious, always at work, called by Deleuze and Guattari: *Desiring Machine*.

I started to enjoy the Baroque style of writing, making theatre, movies, and music; following Foucault, Blanchot, Joyce, Deleuze, Pasolini, Basaglia, Magritte, Jackson Pollock, and many other figures of Modernism; all of them contributed to unveiling the oppressed unconscious of the Western World, which is not the branded on and forced upon tiny, private unconscious concerning only the triangle mom-dad-child.

After more than 50 years of frequenting these authors, and others, moment after moment, I acquired the patience³² to create a space. Blanchot's space is *L'espace littéraire*. My modest – and less prestigious – space is the therapeutic space, a space where psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, in fleeing the so-called “scientific approach,” can become a minor work of art of contemporary times.

Acknowledgements

I thank Alex Daniela Ionita for her revision of my essay; she made my essay in English more poetic, which is what I needed.

Footnotes

¹ Michel Foucault, *Folie et déraison. Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, Paris: Plon, 1961; Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, Paris: Gallimard, 1972.

² Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, New York: Vintage, 1971.

³ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, New York: Pantheon, 1965

⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth, Lectures at the France (1983-1984)*, London: Palgrave, 2011.

⁵ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove, 1966.

⁶ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, New York: Pantheon, 1977

⁷ Giorgio Colli, Mazzino Montinari, *Nietzsche Opere complete*, 26 volumes, in Italian, French, German, Japanese, Italian Publisher Milano: Adelphi. *Nietzsche. Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, German Publisher, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1961 on.

⁸ Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", in Donald Bouchard (ed.) *Language Counter-Memory Practice*, Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press, 1980; Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, New York: Columbia Classics, 1985.

⁹ Michel Foucault, Luther Martin, Huck Guttman, Patrick Hutton, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988.

¹⁰ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women: Religious Significance of Food to Mediaeval Women*, Oakland (California): University of California Press, 1987.

¹¹ Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *Fasting Girls: The History of Anorexia Nervosa*, New York: Vintage.

¹² Hilde Bruch, *Eating Disorder: Obesity, Anorexia Nervosa and the Person within*, New York: Basic Books 1973; Mara Selvini Palazzoli, *Self-Starvation: From Individual to Family Therapy in the Treatment of Anorexia Nervosa*, New York: Jason Aronson, 1977

¹³ Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, F., 1983, *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia, I*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

¹⁴ Leslie Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues*, Firebrand Books: Ithaca, NY, 1993.

¹⁵ James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, New York: Anchor, 1994

¹⁶ Simeon Wade, *Foucault in California*, Berkeley, Heyday, 2019

¹⁷ Alex Ross, "The Eternal Return.", New York: New Yorker. Published in the issue of the October 14, 2019. Alex Ross gives a beautiful synthesis of Nietzsche's intuition of *The Eternal Return*.

¹⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality I. The Will to Knowledge*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1978

¹⁹ Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari *Op. cit.* note 12.

²⁰ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality 4. Confessions of the Flesh*, London: Penguin, 2021.

²¹ Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College de France 1981-1982*, London: Palgrave. 2011.

²² Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality 2. The Use of Pleasure*, New York: Vintage; Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality 3. The Care of the Self*, New York: Vintage.

²³ Michel Foucault, *Op. cit.* footnote 4

²⁴ Marquis De Sade, *The 120 of Sodom*, Redford (Va): Wilder, 2022.

²⁵ Pietro Barbetta, Maria Esther Cavagnis, Inga Britt Krause, Umberta Telfener, *Ethical and Aesthetic Explorations of Systemic Practices*, London: Routledge, 2022

²⁶ Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, *Op. cit.* footnote 12.

²⁷ Gregory Bateson, "Bali: The Value System of a Steady State", *Steps to an Ecology of Mind, Collected Essay in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution and Epistemology*, New York: Chandler 1972, p. 121.

Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead, *Balinese Character, A Photographic Analysis*, New York: The New York Academy of Sciences, 1942.

²⁸ Michel Foucault *Op. cit.* footnote 19

²⁹ Karl Marx *Das Kapital – Capital*, in 3 Volumes, London: Penguin, 1993; Max Weber *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London: Penguin, 2002.

³⁰ Sigmund Freud, *The Unconscious*, London: Penguin, 2005

³² Maurice Blanchot *L'espace littéraire*, Paris: Gallimard, 1955

³¹ Caryl Phillips *The European Tribe*, New York: Vintage

Declarations

Funding: No specific funding was received for this work.

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.