

Young Foucault: The Lille manuscripts on psychopathology, phenomenology, and anthropology, 1952–1955

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Michel Foucault published very little before the *History of Madness* in 1961. (Foucault, 1961, 2006). He would try to prevent republication of his short 1954 (Foucault, 1954) book *Malade mentale et personnalité*, and reluctantly agree to revise it instead. It was that revised version (Foucault 1962), *Maladie mentale et psychologie*, which was translated into English as *Mental Illness and Psychology* (1987 [1976]). Two book chapters were published in 1957—one surveying the history of psychological research between 1850 and 1950, and the other reporting on the current state of the field in France (reprinted in Foucault, 1994 Vol I, 120–137, 137–158). Neither of these texts have been translated into English.

The most interesting publication from this period was his long introduction to a French translation of Ludwig Binswanger's essay "Dream and Existence" (1954, reprinted in 1994, Vol I, 65–119; 1993, Foucault, 1993). Elisabetta Basso, author of *Young Foucault*, has long been the most important guide to Foucault's relation to Binswanger. Binswanger was the founder of the *Daseinsanalyse* school, bringing Heideggerian analysis of *Dasein*, existence, into relation with psychoanalysis. Foucault found it amusing to have published an introduction far longer than the text it prefaced. But while this text anticipates some of the themes of Foucault's later work, perhaps especially his pairing of philosophy and literary examples, the 7-year gap before the *History of Madness* has led many of his commentators to see it as a misstep, a false start, a youthful interest that he moved definitively beyond.

However, if Foucault published little in the 1950s, we now know he wrote much more. The Bibliothèque nationale de France archive of papers left in his apartment when he died, along with other material left in his mother's house, contains many remarkable texts. The most famous is the almost-complete fourth volume of the *History of Sexuality*, published in 2018 and translated as *Confessions of the Flesh* (2018a, 2021c). There are also notes for lecture courses, drafts of some of his published books, reading notes, and some correspondence.

Box 46 is especially noteworthy. It contains 400 pages of manuscripts, most of which have recently been published but await translation. There are notes for a course on the question of philosophical anthropology, probably delivered both at the University of Lille and the École normale supérieure (ENS) in Paris in the early 1950s, a manuscript with the title *Phénoménologie et psychologie*, probably from around 1953–1954, and another manuscript from a similar time, without a title but published as *Binswanger et l'analyse existentielle* (Foucault, 2021a, 2021b, 2022). The editor of the last text is Elisabetta Basso, and the book under review here is an exemplary analysis of the importance of these manuscripts.

Basso's work on Foucault's relation to Binswanger's approach to psychoanalysis dates from her Italian book *Michel Foucault e la Daseinsanalyse* (2007), through articles in English and French, as coeditor of the important collection *Foucault à Münsterlingen: À l'origine de l'Histoire de la folie* (Bert & Basso, 2015), and as editor of some important correspondence, including Foucault's with Binswanger (in *Foucault à Münsterlingen*) and the Binswanger-Gaston Bachelard letters (Basso ed. 2016). She was, therefore, the natural editor of the *Binswanger et l'analyse existentielle* manuscript, and her contextualization in that book is a crucial guide.

Young Foucault takes all of that work and deepens, reassesses, and expands it. It is a significant contribution to our understanding of Foucault's intellectual development, focusing on the box 46 manuscripts, all written while Foucault was teaching in Lille between 1952 and 1955. In 1955, he moved to a teaching and cultural role in Uppsala, Sweden. Before he began teaching in Lille he was a student in Paris, in both philosophy and psychology, and from 1951 teaching at the ENS and beginning work on some possible doctoral theses. None of the planned theses were submitted or published, even though he indicated they were near completion. Those promises, found in a Lille report on his publications, or the CV Foucault gave Georges Dumézil for the Uppsala post, were picked up by his earliest biographers, but caused some confusion and doubt. Now, as Basso and the editor of *Phénoménologie et psychologie*, Philippe Sabot, have persuasively argued, the Lille manuscripts show that Foucault had indeed done quite a lot of work.

While the anthropology manuscript looks like notes for a lecture course—and there are two extant sets of student notes from its delivery in Paris—the other two manuscripts, while certainly related to Foucault's teaching interests, are much more developed. Largely written in complete sentences, and with footnotes, they are steps toward something more. Neither was developed into a final form Foucault wanted to publish, but he did keep them. In contrast, we have limited records of the time in Uppsala, concerning his teaching, public lectures, or the process of drafting the *History of Madness*.

Basso is excellent on situating the *Binswanger et l'analyse existentielle* manuscript in relation to the published 'Dream and Existence' introduction, as well as to Foucault's interest in psychology and a network of thinkers around Binswanger, especially Roland Kuhn. She shows how Jacqueline Verdeaux was not just significant as Foucault's collaborator on the 'Dream and Existence' translation, but also for providing him with some clinical experience, working in a laboratory at the Hôpital Saint-Anne and at the Fresnes correctional center. She reconstructs the story of Foucault's visits to Switzerland to meet Binswanger and Kuhn, especially the first visit to Münsterlingen, in which Foucault, Jacqueline and Georges Verdeaux also attended a Mardi Gras *fête des fous*. Foucault mentions this festival of the mad, where residents in the asylum would parade in masks and costumes, obliquely later in life, but Basso shows how important this was in the connection to Binswanger and Kuhn. While *Young Foucault* is good on the story, *Foucault à Münsterlingen* should also be consulted for the valuable documentary and photographic record it provides. There are a few interesting photographs and manuscript pages reproduced in this book too. While Basso makes use of a large number of archival sources, she also uses some material still in private hands, including letters between Verdeaux and Foucault.

There are many other aspects of this book which are worth attention. The book is particularly interesting for its account of Foucault's attendance at Jacques Lacan's early seminars. In the final substantial chapter, Basso moves beyond her focus on the 1950s to show how the engagement with Binswanger and other work in psychology and psychoanalysis was significant in Foucault's later career, especially in his development of the philosophical-historical approach he called archeology. In the title to his brief but illuminating preface to Basso's book, Bernard E. Harcourt calls this "a genealogy of archaeology."

With the publication of Foucault's manuscripts from the 1950s, and their planned English translation with Columbia University Press in the series Harcourt edits, a new phase of Foucault scholarship is beginning. Two courses on sexuality from the 1960s have already been published and translated (2018b, 2021d), but there are other materials being readied for publication, including Foucault's early diploma thesis on Hegel, a course from Brazil in 1964–1965 on the material which became *The Order of Things*, a manuscript on philosophical discourse from around 1966, and Foucault's teaching in Tunisia, and on Nietzsche at the experimental University of Vincennes. Basso is an invaluable guide to much of this rich new material.

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